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ABSTRACT

This collection presents 68 papers or summaries presented at a 1996 conference on self-study and institutional improvement for institutions of higher education. Papers are grouped in the following 10 chapters (with sample topics in parentheses): (1) "Integrity and Accreditation: Current Issues" (intercollegiate athletics, nontraditional students, electronically offered programs, and interinstitutional agreements); (2) "Integrity and Accreditation: Focus on Faculty" (faculty burnout, faculty governance, and integration of part-time and adjunct faculty); (3) "Integrity and Accreditation: Improving Retention/Completion Rates" (the accelerated baccalaureate degree, community college-university collaboration, barriers to timely degree completion); (4) "General Education/Critical Thinking" (critical thinking, assessment of general education, and competency-based general education); (5) "Assessing Student Learning: Implementing the Assessment Plan" (assessment at Ball State University--Indiana, a culture of assessment for improvement, and comprehensive assessment plans); (6) "Assessing Student Learning: Relating Assessment of Student Academic Achievement to Institutional Effectiveness" (institutional effectiveness and continuous improvement, and linking institutional effectiveness and assessment); (7) "Assessing Student Learning: Tools of Assessment" (technology and assessment, educational outcomes assessment, and student academic achievement in graduate programs); (8) "Assessing Student Learning: The Role of Faculty in Assessment Plans and Programs" (decentralization and faculty ownership, the role of faculty in assessment at Ohio Wesleyan University, and faculty participation in student learning outcomes assessment); (9) "From Self-Study to Site Visit: Case Studies" (14 critical choices in the self-study process, and a case study of the reaccreditation process); (10) "The Role and Responsibilities of the Self-Study Coordinator" (a 12-part process, practical planning procedures, using an institutional self-study guide, and strategic planning); (11) "Self-Study and Evaluation: Practical Advice" (community involvement, the steering committee, the team visit, and self-study for the multi-campus institution); and (12) "Coordinating Special Types of Evaluation" (institutions seeking initial candidacy, using the new criteria, and the mandated focused visit). (Most papers contain references.) (DB)

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1996
A Collection of Papers on Self-Study and Institutional Improvement

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A COLLECTION OF PAPERS ON SELF-STUDY AND INSTITUTIONAL IMPROVEMENT

1996

Prepared for the program of the
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The papers included in this collection offer the viewpoints of their authors. The Commission highly recommends them for study and for the advice they contain, but none represent official Commission directions, rules, or policies.

Susan E. Van Kollenburg, Editor

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Foreword

The Commission has again invited speakers for the Annual Meeting of the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education to provide written materials related to their oral presentations. These papers are presented in *A Collection of Papers on Self-Study and Institutional Improvement, 1996.*

This is the twelfth year we have published our Annual Meeting papers. The theme of this year's meeting is Integrity and Accreditation, focusing on the Commission's Fifth Criterion: "The institution demonstrates integrity in its practices and relationships." This collection includes more than 65 papers from an extraordinarily diverse variety of affiliated institutions. Writers from institutions of all types and degree levels and institutions at varied stages in their development show impressive understanding of critical issues facing their campuses, and what they have to say is useful for all of us. As I read these papers, I was struck by the fact that the advice is not sector-specific: there is something in each paper that representatives from any institution can find stimulating and helpful.

I was also impressed by the creative and effective efforts of individuals from so many institutions to use institutional self-study, evaluation, and assessment as a way to bring about genuine improvement in the quality and integrity of their institutions. This 1996 *Collection of Papers* demonstrates again why the Collection has become an invaluable resource to all who are engaged in institutional evaluation. What is most satisfying about these contributions is that they come from the Commission's membership and are based on direct experience in self-study and institutional improvement. These papers reinforce the characterization of the Commission as an "uncommon alliance" in which the representatives of our member institutions are significant teachers of the evaluation/accreditation process.

In Chapter I, Integrity and Accreditation: Current Issues, you will learn about a technical college's values-based approach to institutional integrity; how politics and process assist a comprehensive regional university to restructure its academic and administrative organization; how the NCAA and NCA criteria can be linked in demonstrating an institution's integrity; how a small private institution meets the needs of bilingual nontraditional students; how WICHE developed principles of good practice for electronically offered higher education degrees and certificate programs; how a proprietary doctoral institution developed an inter-institutional agreement with a Research One institution to deliver library services to distance education graduate students; and about a private institution's long experience in developing contractual relationships with military bases for delivering educational programs. Chapter II, Integrity and Accreditation: Focus on Faculty, features papers on a variety of issues from liberal arts institutions, professional colleges, and community colleges. Chapter III focuses on improving retention/completion rates, while the selections in Chapter IV address general education and critical thinking.

Chapters V-VIII report on current experiences of institutions in implementing their assessment plans, in relating student academic achievement to institutional effectiveness, developing tools for assessing student learning, and the role of faculty in assessment plans and programs.

Chapter IX offers case studies of institutions on self-study and the site visit. Chapter X includes a number of papers on the role and responsibilities of the self-study coordinator, and Chapter XI offers practical advice on self-study and evaluation. Chapter XII reports the experiences of institutions seeking candidacy and moving from candidacy to accreditation.

Because we have learned that previous collections have been useful to those not attending the Annual Meeting as a significant supplement to Commission's official publications on self-study and evaluation, the Commission will make this volume available by mail so long as the supply lasts. We invite those of you who use this collection as a part of your self-study and institutional improvement efforts to send us your comments about its value to you, and we welcome your suggestions for future topics for the publication and the Annual Meeting program.

Patricia A. Thrash
Executive Director
NCA Commission on Institutions of Higher Education

March 1, 1996

Chapter I

Integrity and Accreditation: Current Issues

Criterion Five: A Values-Based Approach

H. Victor Baldi
Patricia B. Frohrib

The 13-member NCA Integrity Subcommittee, representing a cross-section of members from all areas of Fox Valley Technical College (FVTC) in Appleton, Wisconsin, convened to determine an appropriate approach to examining the important issue of institutional integrity. Through a policy inventory of board and admininstrative documents governing FVTC, the subcommittee verified that these documents define the legal, social, and ethical parameters of FVTC operations. It became clear that policy analysis was only part of the self-examination of institutional integrity. With further study, our organizational value statements were identified as explicit statements of how FVTC was expected to operate and truly a better yardstick of integrity than policy statements. The role of values in relation to integrity was reinforced by a literature review and NCA conference presentations on the subject. With a set of articulated institutional values, the subcommittee designed a process to take a closer look at how the College's values are exemplified in the practices and relationships throughout FVTC and areas for improvement.

Values Articulation

The public nature of FVTC effectively mandates the development, adherence to, and monitoring of policies such as affirmative action that establish expectations for institutional behaviors and related accountability system. Even with these ethical underpinnings, FVTC has made a common practice of articulating the key value statements that embody its actions. Early in the self-study process, these value statements were reviewed and revised in conjunction with the development of the college mission and vision.

The six FVTC Value Statements are:

- **Integrity.** We value responsible, accountable, ethical behavior in an atmosphere of honest, open communication with mutual respect and caring for each other.
- **Collaborative Partnerships.** We value partnerships with business, industry, government, educational systems, and our communities.
- **Innovation.** We value creative risk-taking and enthusiastic pursuit of new ideas.
- **Continuous Improvement.** We value continuous improvement of our programs, services, and processes through employee empowerment and professional development in a team-based culture.
- **Customer Focus.** We value commitment to student/staff success and satisfaction by responding to customer needs.
- **Diversity.** We value an educational environment that attracts, nurtures, and supports a diverse student and staff community.

The NCA Integrity Subcommittee reached consensus that the integrity expectations of FVTC were captured in the six value statements. However, a "test" of the College's performance related to the statements had never been attempted. Several elements of the process design surfaced as clear components to address:

- **Definition**–each value needed to be defined in relation to "patterns of evidence" that could be found in an organization that ideally exemplified this value in practice.
- **Policy Linkage**–the process would include a cross-referencing of the board and admininstrative policies that related to each specific value.
- **Strengths**–the process would identify FVTC practices that exemplify the value.
- **Opportunities for Improvement**–the process would solicit and explain the behaviors and practices that could specifically be improved in order for FVTC to be more aligned with the intent of the value statement.
- **Measurement**–the process would include a method to rate FVTC performance as part of the NCA self-study.

In addition to these components, the participatory and evaluative environment of FVTC were key process considerations. Although the process could be piloted with the subcommittee, it needed broad representative participation to be consistent with organizational norms. The notion of a "values audit" may be ominous for some organizations. However, as a learning organization involved for many years in TQM, FVTC is accustomed to practices that examine the organizational climate and evaluate program performance through regular and college wide audit activities.

Overall Process

The NCA Integrity Subcommittee used group brainstorming and prioritization processes to identify the elements of an operational definition of each value, specify examples of FVTC strengths and opportunities for improvement, and rate performance to obtain a ballpark view of how we actually performed. Upon completion of the subcommittee exercise, more staff input was received from key FVTC leadership teams: the Strategic Leadership Team and the Total Quality Leadership Team so that a total of 25 people ultimately participated in the values audit process. The Criterion Five chapter of the Self-Study Report was based on the findings of this exercise and accepted by the NCA Evaluation Team as part of their October 1995 visit.

Operational Definition

The act of defining the value in a narrative form was intended to as clearly a possible communicate specifically what was intended in the value statement. The NCA Integrity Subcommittee members were able to articulate the behavior evident in an organization that was living by the value statement. The following is an example of the operational definition of the FVTC organization value of Integrity.

Sample – Operational Definition of Value Statement
FVTC Value Statement of Integrity

An organization that values "integrity" is able to trust people and information throughout the organization. Decisions are taken at face value without concern that process considerations have been ignored or that personal agendas drive decisions. There is no need to explain operating procedures because they are universally understood. This trustworthy atmosphere nurtures confidence that promised actions and verbal agreements can be depended upon to become reality ("walk the talk"). Every process, budget, and report are to be shared with all members openly. Consistent and useful communication fosters a secure environment in which to challenge the status quo without retaliation. This honesty motivates members to constantly evaluate themselves and consider ways to improve behaviors.

Above all, each member operates with the certainty that everyone can be trusted to do their jobs to the best of their ability. Each person is a valuable asset, not a cost. The organization works to remove fears and ignorance, and the dignity of each individual is respected. The "golden rule" is operative in that members *treat each other the way they want to be treated. The organization ultimately defines its highest achievement as being respected in the eyes of students and the community because of its demonstrated integrity.*

(from FVTC Self-Study, 1995, p.202-203)

Strengths in Relation to the Value Statements

The brainstorming and feedback process to identify strengths is essentially a listing in which the frequency or priority of statements shapes the narrative discussion of the strengths. The following is an example of how Strengths are described in relationship to the value statement.

Sample: Strengths
FVTC Value Statement of Diversity

FVTC has initiated formal and direct actions to support the value of diversity. A Diversity Committee has been organized to provide a focus for issue awareness and assertive implementation. There has been an expanded emphasis upon international/intercultural programming with the addition of diversity-related classes and curriculum. Structured staff development opportunities, including a diversity course for certification, are available to encourage staff involvement. The minority recruiter position provides an in-house resource for recruitment and retention services to encourage a more diverse student population.

The broader definition of diversity extends beyond cultural aspects to address equal opportunity for special populations including women, older adults and people with disabilities. The staff position of Gender Equity Coordinator has helped to raise a focus for both students and staff on the need for and provision of education on such topics as sexual harassment in the workplace. SeniorNet computer classes for older adults and ESL for the Hmong population are examples of special efforts supported by the College to serve the needs of special populations. In the area of opinion diversity, FVTC's implementation of mutual gains bargaining and consensus building in teams provides a model and method for the constructive airing of different points of view.

(from FVTC Self-Study, 1995, p.211-212)

Opportunities for Improvement

Prioritization or the affinity of a line of thinking is the framework for developing the narrative for each value statement. The section is an honest reflection of the overall thinking on the behaviors that need to improve to truly become more aligned with the value statements with relevant examples of practice. The following is an example of how Opportunities for Improvement are described in relationship to the value statement.

Sample Excerpt – Opportunities for Improvement
FVTC Value Statement - Customer Focus

FVTC proclaims its value of customer focus loudly which, consequently, means that all identified needs are watched closely for expeditious action. The wheels of bureaucratic action are often less than responsive to customer needs. Faster response time is needed for employer requests for new academic programs to meet their work force needs. The educational reality of waiting lists is never viewed as customer friendly, but there is a need for a consistent and uniform process to deal with applicants on waiting lists across all instructional areas. Overloaded managers are not always available when a timely decision needs to be made regarding individual customer situations. Similarly, this overload extends to support staff who need front-line support so they can better relate to customers. It is, at times, difficult for students to get the kind of assistance commensurate with a customer-focused organization.

Staff knowledge that some customers may not be receiving the best service possible creates stress for those who care about providing good customer service. Not only is waiting for a response stressful but so is the lack of a similar commitment by other staff who forget that their job is to satisfy students. On some occasions, waiting to deliver a service "with all the bugs out" is truly being sensitive to the customer. However, getting necessary equipment, software, training, and technologies creates delays in uniform service delivery and causes stress.

(from FVTC Self-Study, 1995, p.210-211)

Measurement

The degree of institutional behaviors being connected with each Value Statement was quantified in a performance rating exercise. A scale of 1 (low) to 10 (high) rating was used to collect responses based on FVTC's usual and customary overall performance related to the value. Individual ratings were averaged to establish an overall current rating for each value. The ratings were visually plotted on a Spider Diagram. The conclusion of the Integrity chapter uses these ratings to summarize the values based review.

Sample
Conclusion of Integrity Chapter

> *The overall evaluation of FVTC performance in relation to the six value statements of the organization is above satisfactory (6.6). The highest rated value was Collaborative Partnerships (7.7) with commentary to suggest that current efforts are exemplary and need to expand the new arenas. The value of Innovation was rated quite high (6.9) in overall performance with a clear challenge for the organization to systematically "push the envelope" and be sure to attend to the follow-up processes to support innovative efforts. The mid-ranked value of Customer Focus (6.6) had the narrowest point spread between the highest and the lowest rating. This factor indicates greater overall consensus on the College's performance related to customers and the need to strengthen our methods of advancing meaningful customer service. The rating for Continuous Improvement (6.3) on the lower end of ratings sends a message that as staff identify areas for change, there must be more visible indication that concerns are being actively addressed to truly result in improvement. It is apparent that staff feel FVTC's efforts to fulfill the value of Diversity (6.2) are just beginning to have an impact on the overall performance of the College. Finally, the value of Integrity (6) is rated at the low end of all the values, underscoring that there is clearly room for improvement not only with internal systems and processes but in strengthening the purposeful integration of personal values of effectiveness in both internal and external relationships.*
>
> (from FVTC Self-Study, 1995, p.212)

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Restructuring Academic and Administrative Structures in a Comprehensive University: A Case Study in Politics and Process

Robert G. Culbertson
Charles W. Collins

The University of Wisconsin-Platteville (UWP) has an enrollment of 5,000 with major programs in engineering, agriculture, education, and criminal justice, and is located in a rural community of 10,000 in Southwest Wisconsin. The issue of reorganization on the campus has a long history, having been considered in the 1980s. It was argued then that the academic structure of the University, with five colleges and 33 departments and programs, was not efficient and could be reduced with substantial cost savings to the institution. Likewise, it was argued that there were areas in the administrative structure that could be merged or eliminated, also reducing costs.

Restructuring the academic enterprise is a formidable challenge. The literature on academic cultures overwhelmingly documents the permanence of these cultures, and the inability to significantly change the organizational structures that are supported by these cultures. While every college and university in this country is unique in terms of its culture, there are common themes that permeate our campuses. They include conflict between the professional programs with specialized accreditation and the liberal arts, turf battles over general education programs, mission statements that are often so broad and lofty as to be meaningless, tension with state coordinating boards, inability to cope with an economic environment that is emphasizing "rightsizing" or "downsizing" higher education institutions, and the broad range of governance issues that have become increasingly complex with new avenues for appeals, grievances, and litigation.

Factors that became drivers in the UWP organization included a strategic plan calling for reorganization of the academic and administrative structures, budget problems resulting in the increasing dependence on salary savings from unfilled positions to complete the budget each year, mandates from the University of Wisconsin System Administration to develop strategies for administrative streamlining, and an overall perception on campus that there "might" be a need for change. Nevertheless, there were a number of faculty and staff who strongly resisted the notion of change, arguing that the state would eventually provide additional funding because of the longstanding support for higher education in Wisconsin.

Other challenges in the restructuring process included the absence of a model that would shape the design for the restructuring process. A significant number of the faculty strongly held to the belief that the traditional arts and sciences college was a cornerstone to the academic environment, and that any change disrupting this aspect of the organization's structure was "detrimental" to the University. The individuals holding this position were both credible and persuasive in their arguments. At the same time, it was clear that the budget issues would not be resolved by maintaining traditional models. It was essential that we look for new models if we were to realize substantial savings and stabilize our budget.

After several months of debate and development of position papers on restructuring the University, the theory of "loose couplings" became the model for the process. The fundamental theory of loose couplings has been used in many organizational discussions. Some of the roots can be traced to the work of Glassman (1973)[1] and March and Olsen (1975).[2] The definition used in the UWP reorganization was outlined by Weick (1976).[3] Weick noted,

> By loose coupling, the author intends to convey the image that coupled events are responsive, *but* that each event also preserves its own identity and some evidence of its physical or logical separateness. Thus, in the case of an educational organization, it may be the case that the counselor's office is loosely coupled to the principal's office. The image is that the principal and the counselor are somehow attached, but that each retains some identity and separateness, and that their attachment may be circumscribed, infrequent, weak in its mutual affects, unimportant, and/or slow to respond. Each of those connotations would be conveyed if the qualifier loosely were attached to the word coupled. Loose coupling also carries connotations of impermanence, dissolvability, and tacitness, all of which are potentially crucial properties of the "glue" that hold organizations together.[4]

The next strategy was to identify the "lead" programs that would benefit by couplings with other programs in the University. This was a very controversial issue because every program argued that in one way or another it was a lead program. These debates provoked controversies over the history of funding engineering and business, as well as other long-term antagonisms regarding the role of the liberal arts and allegations that the liberal arts had been seriously neglected. These debates proved to generate more heat than substance and the outcome was generally a standoff. However, the UWP mission statement, set forth in the University of Wisconsin-Platteville Undergraduate Catalog, described the Select Mission of the University. It was to provide "baccalaureate degree programs and specialized programs in middle school eduction, engineering, technology management, agriculture, and criminal justice which have been identified as institutional areas of emphasis."

As the debate ensued through the spring semester of 1994 with dozens of meetings, the theme that was reiterated over and over was the Select Mission of the University as approved by the Board of Regents and that programs "loosely coupled" to the programs identified in the Select Mission would receive funding benefits in the reallocation process. At the same time, general education programs in the broad areas of the liberal arts were also assured that their mission would be reviewed, and that resource allocations would be made to these programs reflecting enrollments in the service courses. While this may appear to be a "win-win" situation for all, there was strong opposition to the reorganization because the proposal to move from five colleges to three colleges eliminated the traditional college of Arts and Sciences and created a new College of Liberal Arts and Education. For example, following the model of "loose couplings," biology was relocated in the College of Business, Industry, Life Science, and Agriculture. The Departments of Mathematics, Chemistry, and Physics were relocated in the new College of Engineering, Mathematics, and Science.

Similar patterns were followed throughout the restructuring process to assure "loose couplings" between the lead programs and programs that provided major support for the lead programs. The goal was to increase the level of synergy between the lead programs and the support programs, increasing funding for the support programs, as well as providing students with opportunities to interact with programs closely associated with their selected majors, benefiting from faculty mentoring in those programs. Additionally, the selection of a major is seldom a firm decision. In many instances, the concept of restructuring by "loose coupling" provided the students with opportunities to meet with faculty members outside their majors to explore a potentially new major or a "double major." Again, the goal was to create new synergies among the various units, based on the philosophical affinity and common body of knowledge shared by the programs. For example, much of agriculture is applied life science. Engineering is extremely dependent on chemistry, mathematics, and physics. Finally, middle level education is highly dependent on strong relationships with the teacher education preparation units, especially in the social sciences.

A fundamental tenet used to support the restructuring through the theory of loose couplings was a commitment to the theory that each of the units would maintain its autonomy in the restructuring process. Nevertheless, each unit had an obligation to develop "loose couplings" with other units in its college, to enhance the norm of reciprocity among the units. Our approach was not that we were "breaking down the walls," often resulting in the loss of identity of the respective units. Rather, our approach was that each unit should strengthen its identity through some sacrifice of autonomy by establishing "loose couplings" with other units as the units came to share resources, including faculty.

The single major threat to the restructuring process came from an effort titled "Re-Focus 2000." This effort was driven by faculty in the former College of Arts and Sciences who argued, as noted before, that the fundamental basis of academe is a strong bond between the arts and sciences, and that, without this, students leave the campus unprepared for life. The arguments were outstanding, as were the proponents. However, each time the issue was discussed, questions were asked about budget. A single, very large College of Arts and Sciences would require a number of assistant deans, to the extent that the savings proposed in the Chancellor's reorganization plan were lost. When the "Re-Focus 2000" organizers were asked for a budget, the argument was that the Chancellor was placing budget above principal—the principal of the traditional ties between the arts and sciences.

As the debate ensued, increased efforts were made to make fiscal data available to the faculty and staff. Colleagues in business and accounting, while not persuaded that the outcome would produce the savings projected, were effective in persuading colleagues across the campus that the Chancellor's projections of a shortfall in the 1994-1995 academic year of approximately $700,000 on a base of approximately $28,000,000 were accurate and intolerable. They also persuaded the body politic of the University that the plan would result in fiscal stability for the University.

In April 1994, the Chancellor's restructuring plan was approved by the University's Faculty Senate on a near-unanimous vote.

The issue of administrative restructuring was also addressed, and, needless to say, this was an area that the faculty observed closely. While the University had been cited as under-administered in the last NCA Team Report, the faculty understood that fairness demanded that the administration also be reviewed for position mergers and position elimination. Among the changes in administrative areas were the following: the offices of credit and non-credit continuing education were merged; the accounting offices in Auxiliary Services and the University Accounting Department were merged; the architect's position in Physical Plant was eliminated; the Director's position in Auxiliary Services was eliminated; and the Assistant to the Vice Chancellor position was eliminated. A significant number of additional changes were made in reporting lines that, again, followed the theory of "loose couplings." Career Services was moved to University Placement Services and the title of the office was changed to Career Planning and Placement. In other ways every effort was made to reduce the number of administrative positions. That effort continues as the University faces additional budget reductions resulting from a shift in property tax to support K-12 schools.

Footnotes

1. R.B. Glassman, "Persistence and Loose Coupling in Living Systems." *Behavioral Science* 18 (1973):83-98.
2. J.G. March and J.P. Olsen, "Choice Situations in Loosely Coupled Worlds." Unpublished manuscript, Stanford University, 1975.
3. Karl E. Weick, "Educational Organizations as Loosely Coupled Systems." *Administrative Science Quarterly* 21 (March 1976): 1-19.
4. Weick, p. 3.

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Integrity In Intercollegiate Athletics

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The area of intercollegiate athletics is one that consultant-evaluators often find great difficulty in assessing. Commonly, this problem is a result of limited knowledge or experience about intercollegiate athletics or the overwhelming size and complexity of the program.

Recently, the NCAA took action that can assist team members and set aside some of the traditional problems that have confronted site visitation teams. At the 1993 NCAA Convention, the Division I membership adopted an intercollegiate athletic certification process for the roughly three hundred Division I institutions. Beginning in 1994 and continuing every five years, approximately sixty institutions undergo this review procedure.

The NCA Commission has taken action demonstrating support for the NCAA certification process. What this means for evaluation teams is that in many cases institution self-studies are available or underway to assist the NCA team in reviewing the intercollegiate athletic program. In those cases where the institution is not covered by the NCAA Division I requirement, the areas of focus at least provide evaluators with some insights or areas in which they might want to question institutional procedures or direction. In these cases, it should be emphasized that these are not requirements; rather they might serve as guides to assist an individual team member.

The NCAA Division I Certification Program has identified four major areas of certification—governance and commitment to rules compliance, academic integrity, fiscal integrity, and commitment to equity. The *NCAA Athletics Certification: A Commitment to Institutional Integrity* identifies a series of operating principles under each of the four areas. In summary, these operating principles are as follows:

Governance and Commitment to Rules Compliance

1. **Institutional Mission.** Maintaining intercollegiate athletics as an integral part of the educational program is a basic purpose of the Association. Consistent with this fundamental policy, the mission and goals of the athletics program shall:

   a. Appear in published form and be given wide circulation within the institution and among its external constituencies;

   b. Relate clearly to the mission and goals of the institution;

   c. Support the educational objectives and academic progress of student-athletes;

   d. Support equitable opportunity for all students and staff, including women and minorities;

   e. Result from a process of development and periodic review involving substantive participation by the major constituent groups of the institution; and

   f. Be reflected in the actual practices of the institution's athletics program.

2. **Institutional Control.** The Association's principle of institutional control vests in the institution the responsibility for the conduct of its athletics program, including the actions of its staff members and representatives of its athletics interests.

3. **Presidential Authority, Governing Board.** The institution's governing board shall provide oversight and broad policy formulation. The chief executive officer shall be assigned ultimate responsibility and authority for the actual operation of the athletics program, with clear and direct support of the board.

4. **Shared Responsibilities.** The athletics program shall be an integral part of the educational enterprise of the institution. As such, appropriate campus constituencies shall have the opportunity to provide input into the formulation of policies relating to the conduct of the athletics program and to scrutinize the implementation of such policies.

5. **Assignment of Rules-Compliance Responsibilities.** The institution shall have in place a set of written policies and procedures that assign specific responsibilities in the area of rules compliance. In critical and sensitive areas, institutional compliance procedures shall provide for the regular participation of persons outside of the athletics department.

6. **Rules-Compliance Accountability.** Rules compliance shall be the subject of an ongoing educational effort, and the commitment to rules compliance shall be a central element in personnel decisions within the department of intercollegiate athletics.

7. **Rules-Compliance Evaluation.** The institution shall provide evidence that its rules-compliance program is the subject of periodic (e.g., annual) evaluation by an authority outside of the athletics department.

Academic Integrity

1. **Student-Athletes Integrated in Student Body.** An intercollegiate athletics program shall be designed to be a vital part of the institution's educational system, and student-athletes shall be considered an integral part of the student body.

2. **Admissions and Graduation.** The institution shall admit only student-athletes who have reasonable expectations of obtaining academic degrees. If the graduation rate of student-athletes is significantly lower than that of the rest of the student body, this disparity shall be analyzed, explained, and addressed (through specific plans for improvement) by appropriate institutional authorities under clearly established and approved policies. If the academic profile of entering student-athletes differs from that of the rest of the student body, the contrast shall be analyzed and explained by regular institutional authorities under clearly established and approved policies.

3. **Academic Authority.** The responsibility for admission, certification of academic standing, and evaluation of academic performance of student-athletes shall be vested in the same agencies that have authority in these matters for students generally.

4. **Academic Support.** Adequate academic support services shall be available for student-athletes. Student-athletes shall be encouraged and assisted in reaching attainable academic goals of their own choosing. When it is determined that individual student-athletes have special academic needs, these needs shall be addressed. The support services shall be approved and reviewed periodically by academic authorities outside the department of intercollegiate athletics.

5. **Scheduling.** The scheduling of athletics competition and practice shall minimize conflicts between athletics participation and academic schedules, especially during examination periods.

Fiscal Integrity

1. **Financial Controls.** Institutional financing of intercollegiate athletics shall follow prudent management and fiscal practices and provide relatively full and stable opportunities for student-athletes. All funds raised for and expended on athletics shall be subject to generally accepted practices of documentation, review and oversight. In addition, all expenditures from any source for athletics shall be approved by the institution. Budget and audit procedures for athletics shall be consistent with those followed by the institution generally and with the provisions of NCAA Constitution, which requires that the institution's annual budget for athletics be approved by the institution's chief executive officer or designee from outside the athletics department, and that a financial audit be performed by a qualified auditor who is not a staff member of the institution and who is selected by the chief executive officer or designee from outside the athletics department.

2. **Established Policies and Procedures.** The institution shall have in place policies and standard operating procedures to ensure that all expenditures for athletics are handled consistently in accordance with NCAA rules.

Commitment to Equity

1. **Gender Issues.** An institution shall demonstrate that in the area of intercollegiate athletics, it is committed to fair and equitable treatment of both men and women. It shall have available adequate information for assessing its current progress in this area and an institutional plan for addressing it in the future. The plan shall provide for accommodating the evolving standards of the Association in the area of gender equity.

2. **Minority Issues.** An institution shall demonstrate that in the area of intercollegiate athletics, it is committed to providing equitable opportunities for minority students and institutional personnel. It shall have available adequate information for assessing its current progress in this area and an institutional plan for addressing it in the future. The plan shall provide for accommodating the evolving standards of the Association in the area of minority issues.

3. **Student-Athlete Welfare.** The institution shall demonstrate a commitment to the fair treatment of student-athletes, particularly in their academic role as students. There shall be evidence that the welfare of student-athletes and the fairness of their treatment is monitored, evaluated, and addressed on a continuing basis.

In those Division I cases, team members will find a detailed listing of self-study items and requirements for evaluation and plans of action. In each case, the overall intent is quite similar to the basic thrust of the NCA review process. Regardless, the size and scope of the intercollegiate program or its divisional status, NCA teams will find these materials helpful to the overall institutional review process.

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Meeting the Needs of Nontraditional Students

Barbara Kraemer
Joaquin Villegas

The 101st North Central Association Conference Theme is "Integrity and Accreditation." The 1994 *Handbook of Accreditation* indicates that an institution meets the area of Integrity or Criterion Five when "the institution demonstrates integrity in its practices and relationships." Thomas Quinn and Julie Brookbank (1995) from Mitchell Technical Institute, South Dakota, addressed the Integrity Criterion in the 100th Annual Meeting of the NCA. They identified a workable definition for the term integrity from Hegerty (1983): "a simple definition of institutional integrity is that an institution does what it says it will do."

Purpose

Following this definition, this paper will examine patterns of integrity in practices and relationships at one institution, to assurance that the institution's practices are consistent with its publicly stated policies. The institution's "stated policies" are translated into objectives or *the doing of what the institution says it will do* from its mission statement *or its reason for being an institution of higher education.* This "reason for being" establishes the level of accountability that an institution of higher education has to its target audience: its student body. St. Augustine College has incorporated its "reason for being" into its educational and support service programs to serve a nontraditional student body.

College Mission

During its 15 years of existence, St. Augustine College has had a motivating belief in the need for a bilingual institution of higher education. This belief crystallized in collegiate, occupational and college preparatory programs that make it possible for the Hispanic population of the Chicagoland area to realize its dreams and aspirations (Juhasz and Plazas, 1993.) This belief is nurtured by the College's mission statement: "St. Augustine College is an independent, bilingual institution of higher education created to make the American system of higher education accessible to a nontraditional student population with emphasis on those of Hispanic descent; and to build a bridge to fill cultural, educational, and socio-economic gaps."

College Population

Currently, the students at St. Augustine College come from many Latin American countries as well as the continental United States. Forty-four percent of the current student body are U.S. citizens, 36 percent by birth (mostly of Puerto Rican origin) and 18 percent are naturalized citizens. The average residence in the United States of the non-citizen is 10 years. Student ages range from 18 to 56 with a median age of 31. More than 50 percent of the students have family responsibilities, and 70 percent rear children (an average of three children per student). Nearly 72 percent are female. What do these data elicit about the student body?

First, the College serves an immigrant working class population that has resided in the United States for an average of 10 years. This implies a lack of familiarity with the country's educational system. In addition, the majority—ninety percent—are first generation college students.

Since the majority of the students are also over 25 and have work and family responsibilities, the College is serving a nontraditional student population with unique characteristics. How does the College respond to its students' strengths and weaknesses in order to make higher education accessible and "to fill cultural, educational and socio-economic gaps?"

College Programs

The mission of St. Augustine College is reflected in its educational programs and curriculum. The College uses a "transitional bilingual" approach in its educational programs. This means that the students are initially taught content courses in their native language while progressively being initiated into instruction in English. Their native language is used as a bridge for English mastery, and the use of English is gradually increased in their course work as they complete of their degrees (Bondavalli, 1991).

The students' unfamiliarity with the U.S. educational programs and practices has led the College to integrate and maximize all of its human resources to assure each student's success. Towards this end, the College has integrated recruitment, academic, and financial aid counseling into one Comprehensive Counseling System. Counselors become facilitator of the students' exploration and redefinition of their goals as effective citizens in U.S. society and in the communities that they live. In general, students are assigned a single academic counselor over their entire career at the College. The counselor gives orientation to students who are not familiar with the world of higher education and also recommends a course plan to satisfy graduation requirements. Counselors assist in the resolution of any conflicts between the student's personal obligations and the College's academic demands. When necessary, the counselors refer the students to community resources for the solutions of personal and family problems that are beyond the resources of College's professional support staff. Each individual student can rely on the following support services during his/her entire college life:

- **Academic advisement** guides the students in the selection of classes most appropriate to their educational and career goals.
- **Academic reinforcement** occurs through study groups, workshops, and special classes and programs offered to underprepared students. These are delivered by both peer tutors and faculty members.
- **Child care** is provided for pre-school and school age children. While students are in class, they are secure that their children are safe and being challenged to develop cognitively and socially through instructional programs.
- **Transfer Center** services give the opportunity for students to receive information about other institutions' transfer requirements and procedures, as well as to become familiar with the U.S. system of higher education.

Along with these support services, the College provides a flexible class schedule to respond to the needs of its students' work schedules or schedules of the mothers/fathers who are raising school-aged children. Typically, each course meets once a week during a morning, an evening, or on Saturday. The adoption of a departmental course syllabus allows students to transfer from day to evening sessions when conflicts with work schedules arise.

Retention and Transfer Studies

Since St. Augustine College is aware of the need to study its progress in being faithful to its mission, its *reason for being*, it has made an effort to identify reasons why students persist or withdraw during semesters or between semesters, in order to take steps to improve retention. The college has facilitated student transfer to four-year institutions and studied graduates who successfully transferred in order to promote completion of bachelor's degrees.

In 1991 the college established a retention task force to look at its record on retention and examine the reasons why students withdrew. Because of the need for more objective data, the research office contracted with UNIMAR, a U.S. Hispanic Communications agency, to conduct a telephone survey of one hundred students who withdrew from the college in the Fall 1992, in order to identify reasons why students withdraw. These reasons were classified as family (37%), educational (35%), and financial (29%). In addition, the research office began to collect longitudinal data by entering cohort, in order to calculate retention and graduation rates for each cohort. The withdrawal rate for Spanish-dominant students is higher than for English-dominant or bilingual students.

Through further investigation the research office will identify other characteristics of students who withdraw. Currently, two faculty members are conducting a retention study of students who entered the college during the 1994-1995 academic year. The study is based on tested models of student persistence: Tinto (1975, 1987); Nora (1987); and Cabrera et al. (1992, 1993).

St. Augustine College graduates between June 1990 and December 1992 were the population for a transfer study that examined various influences on graduating students' decision to transfer to the university. The students with good mathematics placement scores at admission were more likely to achieve academically, intended to transfer to a four-year institution, and actually transferred after graduation (Kraemer, 1995).

Because of open enrollment, the multiple roles of community colleges, and the differing educational goals of students who enter them, community colleges may believe that current retention and transfer rates are sufficiently high. However, St. Augustine College believes that an *institution-wide effort* to promote retention and transfer to four-year institutions, with all the difficulty that the process entails, could result in a higher retention and transfer rates, which could open the door to greater contributions by Hispanics to American society.

Curriculum and Faculty Studies

The college's goal of providing bilingual instruction adapted to the needs of the learners has led to other studies of the bilingual instructional model; student learning styles; and faculty characteristics, goals, and satisfaction.

Since its inception in 1980, St. Augustine College has used both Spanish and English in instruction. During the 1995 fall semester the faculty reviewed the components of the bilingual instructional model with two purposes in mind: (1) improvement of instruction, and (2) orientation of new faculty. A set of guidelines for bilingual instruction were sent to the adjunct faculty for their comments. The responses received will be reviewed during the 1996 spring semester, and recommendations will be presented to the Dean of Academic Affairs for improving the model. Since 82 percent of entering students need developmental English, understanding of how students best learn English is key for the success of the academic program. One member of the Communications Department faculty administered a learning styles questionnaire to 300 students in developmental English classes and found that the group was homogeneous, preferring auditory and kinesthetic learning methods (Itzen, 1995).

In every area of the curriculum, assessment of student learning is taking place that will lead to continual improvement of instruction. Faculty are central in the development and implementation of the curriculum and the assessment plan. Therefore, periodically the college surveys the faculty (1) to identify faculty characteristics and teaching goals, and (2) to improve college and faculty programs and activities. The latest faculty survey was administered during the 1995 spring semester, and the results were shared with the faculty in the fall.

Conclusion

St. Augustine College has consistently directed its efforts toward meeting the needs of a nontraditional student population that has had very limited opportunities for higher education. In its educational programs, support services, studies, and data collection, the college has demonstrated a desire to "do what it says it will do"

(Hegerty, 1983) and to be faithful to its reason for being an institution of higher education—that is, to open doors for Hispanics to become productive citizens, members of the labor force, and parents of the next generation.

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Balancing Quality and Access: Some Principles of Good Practice for Electronically Offered Higher Education Degree and Certificate Programs

Sally Johnstone

The phenomenal growth in distance learning programs has renewed interest around the country in how to ensure that higher education programs delivered via telecommunications are of good quality. Up to now, there has been nothing to guide the review of electronically offered programs from any relevant perspective. That is, neither the state agency responsible for regulations, the regional accrediting community, institutions interested in developing programs for electronic delivery, nor, most importantly, students curious about the possibility of pursuing educational goals via telecommunications have had any way to judge the quality of programs offered via telecommunications technologies.

The efficacy of learning via technology is not itself in question. Research and evaluation studies have consistently demonstrated that the achievement and satisfaction of students who learn via technology equal those of students in regular classrooms. Instead, the quality concern focuses on issues related to student support and to program integrity—Will students in "virtual" learning situations be isolated, with no semblance of human contact with their instructors? How can effective advising and academic support services be provided to distance learning students? How can students in such programs be sure that their learning experiences will equal those on campuses and that their degrees will be seen as equivalent to a traditionally delivered degree program?

These and other concerns have been repeatedly expressed in recent years by:

- **state higher education regulatory agencies,** which have the responsibility for ensuring that citizens of their states have access to quality education;
- **regional higher education accrediting associations,** which are only now beginning to address the need for standards that specifically address electronically delivered education (until very recently, only the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools has developed standards for distance learning);
- **higher education institutions,** which are being pressured from within as technology and distance learning move from the fringes toward the center of the educational enterprise; and
- **prospective students,** for whom the convenience of distance delivery is appealing, but who worry that the education they might receive via telecommunications will not be seen as equal to a traditionally delivered degree program.

A number of groups are now leading regional and national efforts to develop "standards" or "principles" to provide a common framework and common language to address quality. These groups include the regional higher education accrediting associations' Task Force on Distance Learning and The Alliance, a group formed by the American Council on Education, as well as WICHE's Western Cooperative for Educational Telecommunications. The Western Cooperative's Principles of Good Practice for Electronically Offered Degree and

Certificate Programs, now in final form, are based on research on state policies governing interstate program delivery and on extensive reviews, discussions, and comments by higher education leaders in the West. The Principles are the most important outcome of the Western Cooperative's FIPSE-funded project, "Balancing Quality and Access: Reducing State Policy Barriers to Electronically Delivered Higher Education." During the project's final year, staff will work with state higher education agencies to help them incorporate the Principles into state policies.

The Principles of Good Practice have so far been endorsed by the Colorado Commission of Higher Education, the South Dakota Board of Regents, the Montana University System, and the New Mexico Commission of Higher Education. In Alaska, the systemwide Academic Council plans to use the Principles in its Learning Cooperative rule book. Washington State is incorporating the Principles into its Guidelines for Program Planning, Approval, and Review for Four-Year Public Institutions. In addition, the Western Legislators' Conference passed a resolution in October, encouraging western states to consider adopting the Principles as the basis for in-state assessments.

We recognize that these Principles—or any "principles" or even "standards"—are not the final answer on the issue of quality. They provide only a framework for developing the real policies that must emerge from and reflect specific environments. We also know that it is impossible to regulate many types of electronically delivered education programs; there is no way to predict the location of a student studying over the Internet, for example. However much state regulatory agencies would like to control the operation of education that "takes place" within their boundaries, in reality they have no way to stop unscrupulous providers or those with poor quality programs from offering such programs within their state.

Nevertheless, we believe that the Principles of Good Practice for Electronically Offered Academic Degree and Certificate Programs can be of genuine assistance in addressing the quality issue—not only in the West, but nationally.

- **State higher education regulatory agencies and boards.** State higher education offices in several Western states have already committed themselves to using the Principles in their review of electronically delivered programs proposed by in-state providers. We hope in the near future to see widespread agreement to follow this practice. The next step will be to encourage the development of reciprocal agreements whereby any receiving state could rely on a home state's review to ensure quality. Such agreements would, in turn, benefit program providers by ensuring that they would no longer have to meet the disparate requirements of fifty states' regulations.

- **Regional accrediting associations.** Accreditation continues to be an important benchmark for educational quality. It is therefore significant that the accrediting community has agreed to use the Principles as at least the basis for standards being developed to address distance learning. As of December, the boards of the North Central Association's Commission on Institutions of Higher Education and the junior college division of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges have specifically endorsed the Principles and will use them verbatim in their handbooks of accreditation.

- **Higher education institutions.** As colleges and universities move to make programs available beyond their campuses, they are being pressured both by external and internal forces to rethink the role of technology and to develop policies that address issues such as instructional design, faculty-student interaction, and student support services. While they do not in themselves constitute policy, the Principles identify the areas that are crucial to address in policy development. In essence, the Principles offer institutions the basic guidelines for self-regulation. Moreover, for propriety schools, the Principles offer a way to achieve a kind of "seal of approval." Schools that can demonstrate how the Principles are implemented in their programs will be able to advertise this fact and to attract students on this basis.

- **Prospective students.** Empowering the learner is, finally, the only real way to ensure quality in higher education programs delivered via technology. In this regard, the Principles are intended to help prospective students identify what questions to ask of provider institutions. It will be up to students to ask these questions and to make sure they are satisfied with the answers. Recognizing the importance of empowering students, the Western Cooperative will also develop and disseminate a brochure that

Principles of Good Practice for Electronically Offered Academic Degree and Certificate Programs

Preamble

These Principles are the product of a Western Cooperative for Educational Telecommunications project, Balancing Quality and Access: Reducing State Policy Barriers to Electronically Delivered Higher Education Programs. The three-year project, supported by the U.S. Department of Education's Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education, is designed to foster an interstate environment that encourages the electronic provision of quality higher education programs across state lines. The Principles have been developed by a group representing the Western states' higher education regulating agencies, higher education institutions, and the regional accrediting community.

Recognizing that the context for learning in our society is undergoing profound changes, those charged with developing the Principles have tried not to tie them to or compare them to traditional campus structures. The Principles are also designed to be sufficiently flexible that institutions offering a range of programs–from graduate degrees to certificates–will find them useful.

Several assumptions form the basis for these Principles:

- The electronically offered program is provided by or through an institution that is accredited by a nationally recognized accrediting body.
- The institution's programs holding specialized accreditation meet the same requirements when offered electronically.
- The "institution" may be a traditional higher education institution, a consortium of such institutions, or another type of organization or entity.
- These Principles address programs rather than individual courses.
- It is the institution's responsibility to review educational programs it provides via technology in terms of its own internally applied definitions of these Principles.

Principles of Good Practice for Electronically Offered Academic Degree and Certificate Programs

Curriculum and Instruction

- Each program of study results in learning outcomes appropriate to the rigor and breadth of the degree or certificate awarded.
- An electronically offered degree or certificate program is coherent and complete.
- The program provides for appropriate real-time or delayed interaction between faculty and students and among students.
- Qualified faculty provide appropriate oversight of the program electronically offered.

Institutional Context and Commitment Role and Mission

- The program is consistent with the institution's role and mission.
- Review and approval processes ensure the appropriateness of the technology being used to meet the program's objectives.

Faculty Support

- The program provides faculty support services specifically related to teaching via an electronic system.
- The program provides training for faculty who teach via the use of technology.

Resources for Learning

- The program ensures that appropriate learning resources are available to students.

Students and Student Services

- The program provides students with clear, complete, and timely information on the curriculum, course and degree requirements, nature of faculty/student interaction, assumptions about technological competence and skills, technical equipment requirements, availability of academic support services and financial aid resources, and costs and payment policies.
- Enrolled students have reasonable and adequate access to the range of student services appropriate to support their learning.
- Accepted students have the background, knowledge, and technical skills needed to undertake the program.
- Advertising, recruiting, and admissions materials clearly and accurately represent the program and the services available.

Commitment to Support

- Policies for faculty evaluation include appropriate consideration of teaching and scholarly activities related to electronically offered programs.
- The institution demonstrates a commitment to ongoing support, both financial and technical, and to continuation of the program for a period sufficient to enable students to complete a degree/certificate.

Evaluation and Assessment

- The institution evaluates the program's educational effectiveness, including assessments of student learning outcomes, student retention, and student and faculty satisfaction. Students have access to such program evaluation data.
- The institution provides for assessment and documentation of student achievement in each course and at completion of the program.

> highlights the Principles as well as another publication of case studies of the approaches taken by a variety of institutions to implementing the Principles in a range of educational programs. The Principles of Good Practice are an important starting point in ensuring students that educational programming delivered to their homes and work places delivers the quality they are entitled to expect.

The Principles of Good Practice have emerged from a western regional project and they are beginning to take hold in western states. Notwithstanding their regional origins, however, we believe that the Principles of Good Practice may become the basis for national agreement on the "standards" for programs offered electronically. It now seems possible that they may eventually provide—in most cases, for the first time—a basis for assessing the quality of electronically offered programs.

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Developing an Inter-Institutional Agreement to Deliver Library Services to Distance Education Graduate Students

Harold A. Shaffer
Sherrill Weaver

Walden University was commended in a recent NCA accreditation report for its program of library services, identifying its services as an institutional strength. A unique feature of this program of library services is that it is provided under an inter-institutional agreement with Indiana University Libraries-Bloomington (IUL-B). Indiana University-Bloomington (IUB) is the location of Walden University's annual summer session and of one of its 1994 NCA site team visits. This brief history of the development of the agreement will provide a background for discussion about three key issues in inter-institutional agreements: libraries for learners, agreements for innovation, and contracts for mutual benefits.

Introduction: History of the Indiana/Walden Model

Walden University and Indiana University Bloomington (IUB) Libraries first signed an inter-institutional agreement for the provision of library services to Walden University students and faculty during their summer residence on the IUB campus in 1992. Current residential summer session services include full circulation services at all campuses of Indiana University as well as the establishment of the "Walden Library" in the residence hall library of Read Center, home to most Walden University students and faculty during their summer session. The Walden Library houses a fourteen station CD-ROM LAN that extends the electronic resources of the IUB Graduate Library LAN to the Read Center. Other summer session services include holding books and articles on reserve, offering a fee-based document delivery, and providing database search instruction, all of which are available to Walden University students fifteen hours each day of the three-week residency.

Since 1993, the agreement has been expanded to provide year-round as well as summer session services through the Walden University Library Liaison's (WULL) office located on the IUB campus. These year-round services include toll-free telephone, E-mail, and fax access to reference and search support provided by the Library Liaison and Library Services Coordinator in addition to a fee-based document delivery service provided by the IUL-B Document Delivery Service (DDS) unit.

In the past year, the terms of the inter-institutional agreement have been changed in response to electronic delivery initiatives by Walden University. The Walden University Library Liaison has assisted Walden University in planning and implementing access to electronic databases and online database search instruction via the Walden Information Network (WIN).

The evolving inter-institutional agreement reflects the increased scope and costs of the library services program that IUL-B Access Services Department has developed under contract to Walden University. These increases have been negotiated annually based on the educational mission shared by both institutions.

Issue One: Libraries for Learners

Successful library services for adults must focus on the unique needs and experiences of those learners. That means that the library services must be

> designed to support the university's mission of serving adult learners and to assist in the achievement of the educational objectives of programs as delineated by the learning outcomes in the university's curriculum. To this end, the university develops its learning resource services in much the same fashion as corporate/special library/information centers within business and government. Owing to the structured nature of the curriculum and the professional nature of most course offerings, learning resource services are highly specialized, relying on a coordinated mixture of online database searching and a well-selected periodical collection. (Garten and Hartwell, 117)

The research needs of Walden University students are met with the same mix of human, computer, and print ingredients as noted above, but the mix is created by students who draw on resources not from one institution but from two: IUL-B and Walden University. This inter-institutional mix is made possible by the preparation at IUL-B for the integration of its library services into its own adult learner information environment.

> In an increasingly more complex information environment, the research library will be expected to be more directly integrated into the teaching/learning role of the university and to provide instructional support in the classroom and through information system design. The student population will be increasingly characterized by part-time and older individuals, and there will be an expanding focus on distance education and lifelong learning. (Neal and Steele, 84)

The information infrastructure on which the Indiana/Walden model for library services has been built has itself been planned for a changing student population at Indiana University. Thus, the IUL-B and Walden University agreement is successful because both institutions increasingly share a similar student population. To the extent that both institutions recognize and relate their program of library services to this adult learner population, the model will continue to evolve in ways that provide educational benefits to both universities.

Issue Two: Agreements for Innovation

In order to create a successful inter-institutional agreement, both universities must not only understand how their missions and students are alike, but must also understand how they are different. The differences between institutions are reflected in organizational norms.

> In the past, nontraditional and often entrepreneurial-type education has been viewed with suspicion by library administrators. This has been true when those institutions gave appearances of using others' resources with little thought of quid pro quo. Today there is growing evidence that traditional and nontraditional entrepreneurial-type institutions can coexist and mutually benefit each other. We must first recognize that the traditional student is no longer the norm and that a group of culturally unique, nontraditional institutions have arisen that are meeting concretely the needs of both working adults and those students who want an education but not under the time and location constraints imposed by more traditional institutions. Library administrators within traditional academic institutions need to see these programs not as threats to their own institutional models but as unique challenges to greater innovation within their own institutions and libraries. (Garten and Hartwell, 123)

These organizational differences must be kept in mind by the institutional leaders responsible for reaching an understanding that can be embodied in a document to which both can agree. While similarities give institutions cause to cooperate, differences give them opportunities for mutual benefit from innovation that brings nontraditional strengths to traditional institutions and vice-versa. To take advantage of these benefits, university library leaders need to be prepared to adapt to nontraditional organizational structures: "the research library must be able to respond quickly and effectively to the changing environment. Effective response to opportunities requires mobility and less rigidity in organization" (Neal and Steele, 83). The mobility and adaptability that characterize many nontraditional institutions can become attributes of traditional university libraries through the experience of the partnership.

Issue Three: Contracts for Mutual Benefits

The Indiana/Walden model is a good example of how similarities as well as differences can be the basis for a mutually beneficial agreement. For Walden University, "the main advantage of the agreement was a uniform program of access and delivery of research resources to a student body that was scattered throughout the USA and met only during dispersed residency summer sessions" while for Indiana University Libraries-Bloomington" the agreement offered the opportunity to develop an in-house pilot program, with external funding, for offering distance education library support" (Weaver and Shaffer, 20). These were the intended contributions and benefits embodied in the first memorandum of understanding signed by the two universities.

Contracts or memoranda that document inter-institutional agreements ought to detail the contributions of both institutions in order to be fair to each.

> One avenue for dealing with the controversial issue of fair use of traditional university-based libraries by entrepreneurial universities is the development of formal contractual arrangements. Essential to developing formal contractual arrangements are fee-based structures. Well-thought-out fee-based structures ensure that there will be equitable and satisfactory remuneration for the services to be delivered by the traditional university-based libraries to the entrepreneurial university libraries. (Garten and Hartwell, 120)

The agreement between IUL-B and Walden University is based on a memorandum of understanding that covers both the residential summer session and remote year-round library services. The ongoing challenge to both universities has been to assess accurately and equitably the costs and benefits of the entire program. A fair cost-benefit balance is not an easy one to reach especially since so many library costs are hidden in an infrastructure which is really a matrix of services. For this reason, institutions should consider carefully their criteria for an equitable contract.

Appreciating Virtual and Veritable, Virtuoso and Virtuous Libraries

In the dispersed residency model around which the Walden University curriculum is created, library services must be adaptable to both the learning and living environment of the adult learner. Through most of the year, those environments are the same. So, electronic databases, online workshops in search techniques, home-delivery of loaned books and photocopied articles, as well as E-mail, phone, and fax reference services, can be accessed by students from their homes. Walden University students, however, also attend summer sessions, which means planning and delivering face-to-face services in a traditional on-campus learning and living environment. Conveniently, "the veritable (true or physical) library for intensive on-site summer sessions and the virtual library to support extensive off-site independent study are both created within the present IUL-B information environment" (Barsun and Weaver). An understanding of the relationship between the virtual library and the veritable library is essential to developing an understanding of the costs and benefits of an agreement for library services between a university library and an institution without a library.

> Cooperation among libraries in combination with expanding information availability through electronic strategies has encouraged the concept of the virtual library, that is, the ability to provide access to information regardless of its location and with reduced reliance on local ownership. The virtual library will become real only if both the virtuoso library, that is, the library with the experience, expertise and resources to acquire research materials, and the virtuous library, that is, the library with the ability and interest in making these research resources available to faculty and students at other institutions, are able to thrive. (Neal and Steele, 86)

Not all libraries are virtuoso as well as virtuous. But within many libraries there exist a few committed and active leaders willing to bring staff members interested in innovation together with distance educators. The commitment by even a small group of the virtuoso and virtuous can create an environment of cooperation; members of small group, with strong leadership, can effect organizational change. Both library leaders and distance educators need to understand that "small-group collaboration is essential to real and effective empowerment. The organization must promote and support unit-level and inter-unit discussion of improvements to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of services and operations" (Neal and Steele, 84). The success of the Indiana/Walden model rests on the commitment of the IUL-B Access Services department team in bringing circulation, document delivery, administrative services, contract management, and program management functions together in an environment of innovation supported by the IUL-B administration.

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Contractual Relationships for Educational Programs: The High Road

Joseph C. Ernst, Jr.

Park College is synonymous with quality traditional programs on the home campus and in nontraditional college education on US Armed Forces installations throughout the United States. Since 1972, Park College has successfully competed contractually with other colleges and universities for the opportunity to enhance the education of airmen, soldiers, sailors, and marines. Several of our graduates can be found in the general officer and senior enlisted ranks or in top leadership roles in civilian industry.

- **In the Beginning.** The military services established civilian educational goals for their officer and enlisted corps to ensure that 21st Century leadership and technology could be effectively and efficiently applied. Most installations have an Education Services Officer (ESO); Chief, Education and Military Training; or Education Services Specialist.

- **Educational Program Initiation Process.** The ESO initiates a "needs assessment survey" among his or her constituents to identify a market for a college program. The survey and subsequent assessments identify specific requirements and resources on the military installation. If the ESO decides that the most effective method of delivery is inviting colleges to establish a Center on the installation, he or she invites Request For Proposals (RFP), from known institutions by telephone and/or mail.

- **Institutional Proposal.** The Request for Proposal (RFP), or outline of what the contractual party is looking for, arrives at the institution. It is necessary to follow each descriptive section in the RFP with a succinct explanation of how the institution will perform to the specification. Also, the RFP should include the mission statement, goals, degree offerings, costs, staffing, and administrative requirements. The institution must meet any imposed deadline stated in the RFP. Requests for extensions are generally ignored. You must address the proposal *exactly* as prescribed in the RFP or suffer the consequences. Use Federal Express, United Parcel Service (UPS) or Roadway Package System (RPS) to deliver your proposal and obtain the dated receipt of delivery, along with the signature of the addressee.

- **Criteria for Selection.** Generally, selection as a provider of educational programs is based on:
    - Ability to perform the given service
    - Cost (tuition)
    - Accreditation and State Approval
    - Acceptance of an elaborate inspection process
    - Flexibility to "give back" to the military community

- **Reputation.** The military is looking for accelerated programs with semesters or terms nine weeks in duration, built-in ability to meet the demanding schedules of service members, the home campus infrastructure to support five terms per year at each established Center, and a proven track record. In Park College's case, credibility is enhanced by identifying graduates who later became general officers and command sergeants major. It is difficult to ignore success!

- **Cost.** The military subsidizes tuition by typically paying 75% of the cost. The cheaper the tuition, the further the subsidies go.

- **Accreditation and State Approval.** Accreditation and ability to obtain state licensure are minimal criteria for all who bid on the contracts.

- **Inspections.** The Air Force calls its process, "Quality Education System" (QES); the Army, Navy, and Marines have "Military Installation Voluntary Education Review" (MIVER). These inspections are four-day intensive reviews of administrative and academic performance. These external examinations are in addition to an institution's own internal quality control procedures and those inspections conducted by the state, Veterans Administration, and regional accrediting bodies.

- **Flexibility.** The military service expects institutions to "give back"...have a spirit of community. Park College awards a 30 credit hour scholarship to a military family member at each Center; and two nine semester-hour McAfee Library Scholarships to active duty Air Force personnel or their families at our Air Force Centers. Park College pioneered the concept of returning 2% of tuition revenue generated at each site to installation libraries for the purchase of books, periodicals, CD-ROM, computers, and related resource materials.

You Won!

The contractual relationship is currently developed in a negotiated Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) or Memorandum of Agreement (MOA). In the future, comprehensive solicitations followed by detailed, competitively bid contracts will be the standard. This move, as seen by the military, ensures greater control over educational services and "locks in" tuition rates and related costs.

Once an institution's proposal is accepted, the institution's CEO will be asked to sign an MOU/MOA/Contract, review the material thoroughly, and obtain legal advice, if necessary. Do not be surprised if the contractual party awards lower division courses to one institution, upper division courses to another, and graduate level courses to still another. The *selected* colleges are partners, not competitors. Work together to ensure all schedules complement one another. The contractual party is interested in the synergy effect—what the team produces.

Highlights of the Contractual/MOU/MOA Agreement

Generally, the following clauses are found:

- **Responsibilities.** The document spells out who is responsible for services and support. For instance, if the institution's intent is to have utility costs shared, but is not described in the contractual language, the contractual party generally has the legal protection, not the institution. In other words, the institution will be responsible for supplying the full utility service.

- **Financial Services.** This describes how the students are going to pay for their share of the tuition. It also identifies the financial reports the post-secondary institution must furnish or make available for inspection.

- **Administrative Services.** This describes office and classroom space. It delineates which fees will be assessed, and describes who pays in each separate area.

- **Class Size, Format, and Scheduling.** This describes the minimum number of students each course must have to meet the educational institution's financial investment and addresses term/semester length and other unusual features, like mediated distance learning, to meet contractual party expectations.

- **Personnel Administration.** Identifies minimum qualifications of the educational institution's staff and faculty, and requires a series of solid regulations and procedures to govern those employees.

- **Quality Assurance.** This section will specify the conditions under which the ESO or designee can visit the classrooms, inspect records, and conduct audits and inspections. Each institution will be required to furnish the institution's written Quality Control Program and a quality assurance plan checklist patterned after the requirements of the written agreement.

Focus on Criterion Five—Integrity

Ethical issues often emerge from conflict, if let go that far! The key to success is to possess the flexibility to accept criticism and implement changes. It is having the moral courage to make a self-analysis, recognize weaknesses, and then do something about them. Do not wait for the conflict that will certainly come.

In the contractual arena, here are a few common ethical issues:

- **False or Misleading Advertising.** Has your institution reported that you are "VA approved?" The Veterans Administration might take umbrage. Have you advertised that North Central approved specific courses or programs? Take a look at pages 160-161 in the *Handbook of Accreditation, 1994-96*. Does the institution advertise that the military or a specific service has approved the institution? All of these examples are unacceptable. Ignorance of the rules is not an excuse; the lack of *enforcement* is not justification for continuing to violate the rules. Park College has centralized the approval process for advertising to ensure legal and ethical compliance.

- **Quality Assurance Program.** Does the institution have a written quality control procedure? Is it used? If not, the contractual party will apply its own. This is false economy and the institution will be out of the business of contracting for educational programs. Park College has a staff assistance team that conducts site visits to make certain that quality control procedures are exercised.

- **Misrepresentation and Deception.** When the contractual party's inspection team arrives, are the staff candid and approach the process in an open, "tell me how to do it better," manner? Park College prepares an extensive self-study for each visit that assesses the strengths and weaknesses of the academic program and outlines the plan to make further quality improvements.

- **Oversight Processes.** Does the institution have a procedure to detect problems in educational delivery? Park College requires that every course be evaluated, in writing, by the students. Each time new faculty begin their first courses, they are evaluated by an on-site Academic Director and annually thereafter. New faculty prepare their own assessments of the course and, together with the student surveys and Academic Director evaluation, the material is reviewed by the Center Administrator and then forwarded with comment to home campus for review by Program Coordinators (seasoned full-time faculty in that particular discipline). The data are also evaluated by the Director of Site Operations and Quality Assurance and the Vice President for the School of Extended Learning.

  There is tangible evidence of this oversight process:

  - Documented cases of faculty not teaching for Park College again.
  - Faculty placed on probation and required to repeat the entire new faculty evaluation process.
  - Faculty released from their contract *before* the term is completed and the students re-enrolled in the same course, with a different faculty, at no further expense to the students.

Ethics In All Our Relationships

The value of integrity drives the ethical conduct of Park College employees and associates. The College stakes its reputation on adherence to the highest ethical standards, which surpass the letter of the law or contractual party's established criteria. Honor has almost extinguished itself from the plains of America. It is up to institutions of higher learning to reignite the guiding light of righteousness and abide by the principle of, "do the right thing."

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Chapter II

Integrity and Accreditation: Focus on Faculty

Burnout in Context: A Liberal Arts College Explores the Nature and Consequences of Faculty Burnout

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Introduction

In the initial stage of its self-study process, the assessment committee at Colorado College collected evidence that verified what many faculty already knew: that burnout is a crucial issue affecting the faculty at the College. The committee was concerned about faculty burnout since it is a factor that could adversely affect the quality of teaching and learning at the College. In a report to the college's Board of Trustees presented on March 10, 1995, the committee noted that faculty who reported burnout were less likely to engage in activities that enhance the teaching and learning atmosphere at the college and that they were more likely than their peers to consider early retirement from the college or from academe altogether. In addition, the committee reported that distinct demographic characteristics of affected faculty indicate that the work environment at Colorado College may hinder the development of certain groups of faculty. These two broad generalizations regarding faculty burnout led the committee to recommend that "serious attention" be given to the issue in the "immediate future."

Since that time, the committee has undertaken several studies to learn more about faculty burnout. It searched education and business periodical indices to gather published studies relating to burnout in general and specifically to its manifestation in educators. It has obtained data from the Higher Education Research Institute (HERI), which has enabled it to compare faculty attitudes at Colorado College with the attitudes of faculty from a consortium of ten other highly-selective schools, and it has held a focus group of those Colorado College faculty who identify themselves as dissatisfied with the teaching and learning environment at the College. These steps enabled the committee to present a clearer picture of the nature and consequences of faculty burnout to the Board of Trustees at its June 1995 meeting. Specifically, the committee was able to do the following:

- define the phenomenon of burnout;
- articulate the role burnout plays in faculty attitudes and activities;
- compare, in a very limited way, the work environment at Colorado College with that at a consortium of similar colleges;
- form some hypotheses regarding the causes and consequences of burnout at Colorado College; and
- chart a path for future research on faculty burnout.

Institutional Profile

Colorado College is an independent liberal arts college, located in a residential section of Colorado Springs, a community of 400,000 people. The College enrolls an average of 1,900 undergraduate students, of whom approximately half are women and half are men. The College grants the Bachelor of Arts degree and the Master of Arts in teaching.

A distinguishing feature of Colorado College is the Block Plan, a system implemented in 1970 and developed and refined since then. The Block Plan divides the academic year into eight three-and-a-half week segments or "blocks." Students typically take one block at a time, and faculty teach one. (Each block is equivalent to four hours of credit under a traditional semester system.) Variations of the plan include courses lasting more than one block and team-taught blocks. Generally, students complete eight blocks per academic year.

There are several especially important instructional features of the Block Plan. First, courses do not place competing demands on students; thus, they are able to give their full attention to each course they take, without "time-stealing" from other courses. Each class day is extremely important. One result is that there is a very high level of class attendance. In addition, class sizes are kept small; there is a limit of 25 students per class, with a practical average class size of approximately 13 students. Class time is unregulated by rigid schedules, and instructors are free to organize the blocks in a variety of ways; under this system, lectures are used less frequently than under other systems, and seminar discussions, active laboratories, and field experiences are used more frequently.

The assessment committee documented strong evidence that the Block Plan is and will continue to be an overwhelmingly satisfactory format for teaching and learning. However, the plan presents challenging problems to the College's faculty, who must balance the demands of an intense teaching schedule with their research interests and personal lives.

Defining Burnout

An analysis of the responses collected on the assessment committee's 1994 Faculty Survey indicates a strong correlation between survey question 25, "How much stress do you feel you have experienced over the last two years?" and survey question 64c, which asks the degree to which the respondent agrees with the following statement: "The Block Plan causes exhaustion and burnout for me." Twenty-seven percent of the faculty respondents indicated that the stress they had experienced over the last two years had been "Extremely high," while 52 percent indicated that it had been "Somewhat high." Fifty-eight percent of the faculty reported burnout, with 20 percent indicating that they "Strongly agree" with statement 64c and 38 percent indicating that they "agree."

Although a strong correlation exists between those who indicated that they experienced stress and those who agreed with the burnout question, the assessment committee sought to distinguish between these two phenomena. "Stress" refers to a physical, mental, and/or emotional response to a factor that upsets an individual's equilibrium. Many such factors may interfere in the life of a faculty member. HERI identifies the following potential sources of stress: household responsibilities, child care, care of elderly parent, physical health, review/promotion process, subtle discrimination, personal finances, committee work, faculty meetings, colleagues, students, research or publishing demands, institutional procedures and "red tape," teaching load, children's problems, marital friction, time pressures, and lack of personal time. On its 1994 Faculty Survey, the assessment committee listed each of the HERI "stressors" and included one additional potential source of stress: the College's Block Plan calendar. While one or many of these factors may cause stress at any given time, the physical/emotional/mental response, conceptualized as "stress," is assumed to be temporary.

Burnout, on the other hand, is conceptualized as a chronic inability to deal with stress. This inability may be a result of an individual's internal emotional dynamic or it may result from factors external to the individual's personality, such as the presence of some underlying, ongoing source of stress (e.g., chronic health problems, or long-term friction with a close colleague, such as one in a faculty member's own department), or it may result from the presence of multiple stressors at one time. If stress is conceptualized as a point-in-time disequilibrium, with a relatively quick return to a comfortable equilibrium, then burnout may be conceptualized as a chronic condition, in which a comfortable equilibrium no longer seems possible. For the purposes of its study, the assessment committee considered "burnout," "stress," and "no stress" as points along a continuum, with no clear dividing line between stress and burnout.

Recent literature points to three critical components of job-related burnout:

- **Emotional Exhaustion:** A feeling of being drained or sapped of emotional energy;
- **Depersonalization:** Negative, cold or emotionally distant feelings towards clients and/or coworkers; and
- **Low Personal Accomplishment:** The feeling of being unable to accomplish important goals.

These three components of job-related burnout have been shown to have significance in professions emphasizing interpersonal relationships, such as medicine and education.

Role of Burnout in Faculty Attitudes and Productivity

In its preliminary report to the College Board of Trustees, the assessment committee identified several attitudinal and behavioral characteristics that were strongly associated with a positive response ("agree" or "strongly agree") on the burnout question. An obstacle the committee faced in interpreting these results was the role of burnout with respect to these attitudes and behaviors. These—and other results since analyzed by the committee—now may be understood as reflective of the nature of burnout in general, and, specifically, the three components of burnout as described above.

Using an extensive array of instruments, including its own surveys, 1992 survey evidence from the HERI and focus group analysis, the assessment committee concluded that all three components of job-related burnout are observed in those faculty reporting burnout at Colorado College. Faculty articulated the feeling of emotional exhaustion in open-ended questions on the 1994 Faculty Survey and in a focus group facilitated by a private consultant. Faculty experiencing burnout were more likely to demonstrate withdrawal from interaction with their peers. They were also more likely to have negative attitudes about students. Finally, faculty experiencing burnout were more likely than their peers to feel frustrated in their ability to accomplish important teaching and research goals. The degree to which these three components of job-related burnout influences the teaching and learning environment at Colorado College is an important issue for the assessment committee.

Burnout in Context

The assessment committee does not have access to data regarding faculty burnout at other campuses. It cannot, therefore, compare the level of burnout at Colorado College to the level of burnout at any other educational institution. Thus, the committee may not make conclusions about whether the degree of burnout experienced at Colorado College may be considered normal.

The Committee does, however, possess data that enable it to analyze the research and teaching activities of faculty experiencing burnout, the research and teaching activities of faculty at Colorado College versus faculty at a consortium of ten other highly-selective private colleges, and the prevalence of stress at Colorado College and the "Consortium 10" colleges. These data were provided by HERI.

Faculty Productivity

On the 1994 Colorado College Faculty Survey respondents were asked to indicate the number of articles, books, and other research projects they had published in the previous three years. The assessment committee analyzed these data in the context of faculty burnout and determined the average number of research works published by each category of faculty on the "burnout scale." The committee observes that while faculty reporting burnout were more likely to feel incapable of fulfilling their research goals, these faculty did not in fact produce less research than faculty who did not report burnout.

Furthermore, the committee observes that relative to their peers at the Consortium 10 colleges, Colorado College faculty, as a whole, produced a comparable level of research. This is despite the fact that Colorado

College faculty were less likely than Consortium 10 faculty to indicate that their primary interest "leans toward" research or lies "very heavily" in research.

With respect to teaching, the committee found that the number of courses taught by faculty experiencing burnout is reflective of the faculty as a whole. The average number of blocks taught by faculty who responded positively to the burnout question (on the 1994 Colorado College Faculty Survey) was 5.9. It was the same for those who responded negatively to that question. Thus, burnout does not appear to negatively influence the number of blocks taught by a faculty member.

The 1992 HERI survey enables the committee to compare the number of undergraduate courses taught by Colorado College faculty with the number taught by Consortium 10 faculty. Relative to their peers at the Consortium 10 colleges, Colorado College faculty, on average, teach more classes at the undergraduate level. These classes include general education courses and other BA or BS undergraduate credit courses.

In summary, the assessment committee concludes that compared with their peers at the Consortium 10 colleges, Colorado College faculty produce a comparable level of research and teach more. Within Colorado College, faculty experiencing burnout teach as many classes as those who were not experiencing burnout, and do not appear to be negatively hampered in their actual research production.

Stress

Nearly all of the Colorado College and Consortium 10 faculty surveyed by HERI in 1992 indicated that the amount of stress they had experienced during the previous two years was extreme or moderate. At Colorado College, 95 percent of the faculty reported extreme or moderate stress; at the Consortium 10 colleges, 90 percent reported such stress. Both populations reported stress from the same sources. At Colorado College the top five "stressors," i.e., those the highest percentage of faculty reported as a "source" of stress were, respectively: lack of personal life, time pressures, teaching load, household responsibilities, and colleagues. Faculty at the Consortium 10 colleges ranked a similar list as their greatest stressors. The top five stressors reported by these faculty were, respectively: time pressures, lack of a personal life, household responsibilities, teaching load, and research or publishing demands (colleagues ranked sixth on this list).

Preliminary Conclusions Regarding Burnout

The assessment committee concludes that evidence from the 1994 Colorado College Faculty Survey, the 1992 HERI faculty survey results from Colorado College and the Consortium 10 colleges, and the focus group facilitated by a private consultant documents the three components of job-related burnout among the faculty at Colorado College. These components are as follows: feelings of emotional exhaustion, negative or distant feelings toward colleagues and students, and a sense of being incapable of meeting important teaching and research goals. The committee also notes that certain sources of stress appear to be more problematic for Colorado College faculty than they were for the faculty at the Consortium 10 colleges. The committee has no evidence, however, that burnout is a greater issue at Colorado College than it is at the Consortium 10 colleges.

Burnout does not negatively affect the quantity of research published or the number of courses taught by Colorado College faculty. Nor does it appear to "spill over" to the interaction between faculty and students. According to data collected by HERI in 1994, seniors at Colorado College were more satisfied than their peers at other private colleges with their contact with faculty and the quality of instruction they received at their institution.

Recommendations for Future Research

An analysis of the demographic characteristics of faculty who reported burnout will be a critical element in any long-term research on burnout at Colorado College. The assessment committee recommends that such an analysis be undertaken and has, in fact, begun collecting data from the Higher Education Research Institute that may prove fruitful for this research. The committee also considers important an analysis of the effect, if any, of faculty burnout on College staff. Additionally, the committee recognizes the degree to which the timing of the 1994 Colorado College Faculty Survey may have influenced the responses. This survey was administered in Block 8 (beginning in early May), which is considered by many faculty as the time of year when they are most fatigued. Future research on burnout should consider time of year as a variable in faculty burnout. Finally, the 1994 Colorado College Faculty Survey allows only a "snapshot" of burnout at a single point in time. If possible, future research on burnout should be longitudinal in nature, allowing an analysis of longer-term characteristics of burnout as it relates to the teaching and learning environment at Colorado College.

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Linking Faculty Governance to Institutional Priorities

James L. Pence

One of the most challenging tasks of a college is to link the work of faculty committees to institutional planning. The task master in this enterprise is typically the chief academic officer, who carries leadership responsibility for creating, sustaining, and assessing those linkages and the outcomes associated with them. During a period of self-study in preparation for reaccreditation, deans like me are given to thoughtful reflection on the practices of faculty governance. "Are we demonstrating integrity in our practices and relationships?" is a good question to be applied to the role of the faculty in defining institutional priorities and fulfilling institutional goals. If the system of faculty governance is working, one might argue, the activities of faculty committees and institutional planning initiatives are brought into a productive congruence, creating a synergy that clearly enhances institutional effectiveness.

The Contexts

From my perspective, not enough has been written in higher education literature on the relationship between faculty governance and effective institutional planning. I have found two books useful. Robert Birnbaum's *How Colleges Work* provides an overview of organizational dynamics and the need for faculty governance systems that encourage "sense making," not just decision making. Birnbaum's descriptions of typical models, together with his explanation of the cybernetics of academic organizations and leadership, give an insightful perspective on faculty governance: "Governance is just a process that permits people to work together. If people see some sense in what they are doing, if they are excited, if they believe they are making a difference, their governance system is serving its purpose."

In *Strategic Governance*, Jack Schuster and colleagues describe "approaches that successfully blend the requirements of intelligent strategic planing with those of legitimate, participative governance." The authors use case studies to analyze attempts of campuses to respond to the "four imperatives" for effective decision-making: involvement, efficiency, environmental responsiveness, and leadership. They propose a strategic planning council (SPC) model that is "purposefully connected to the normal governance subsystem." Administratively-driven, externally-responsive strategic planning processes, they argue, "most of the time are out of sync" with faculty-driven and internally-oriented governance systems.

I have also found Peter Senge's work helpful in challenging my own thinking about faculty governance. In *The Fifth Discipline* and *The Fifth Discipline Fieldbook*, Senge describes strategies and tools by which "an organization can learn." By Senge's definition, most colleges are, ironically, not very effective learning organizations. They do not manifest the characteristics of organizations deeply committed to "planning as learning." "Learning in organizations," Senge writes, "means the continuous testing of experience, and the transformation of that experience into knowledge—accessible to the whole organization, and relevant to its core purpose." Most deans I know would think they had succeeded in their positions if only they could provide leadership to create and sustain a faculty governance system that expanded the capacity of faculty "to hold and seek a vision, to reflect and inquire, to build collective capabilities, and to understand systems." If Senge's argument is valid, the very survival of colleges and universities is dependent upon their abilities to function as learning organizations. "In the long run," he writes, "the only sustainable source of competitive advantages is your organization's advantage to learn faster than its competition."

The Question

"Are we demonstrating integrity in our practices and relationships?" Applying this question to faculty governance is not a simple task. Faculty committees tend to work their own agendas, turnover or rotation of terms impedes productivity and continuity, and faculty are not always inclined to provide unified support for institutional priorities. As Ehrle and Bennett's study on the role of the chief academic officer in governance noted, "Securing faculty support for an idea or project can take time and energy completely out of proportion to the value of the outcome." Given the realities and complexities of campus politics, and in consideration of the value most faculty place on process as content, effective faculty governance is a critical, albeit illusive, component of institutional effectiveness.

A Response

For the past three years, my colleagues and I at Wartburg College have attempted to increase the effectiveness of faculty governance by implementing a system of annual agendas and annual reports designed to link the work of faculty committees to institutional priorities. Each summer, I prepare a document called the "Academic Agenda" for distribution at the Fall faculty workshop. The Agenda identifies priorities for faculty committees and for faculty and administrative positions reporting to me. Specific items for the Agenda are derived from three sources: 1) the institutional strategic plan; 2) the summer administrative planning retreat; and 3) annual year-end reports from committees and individuals in my reporting line.

The Agenda is published and disseminated to all faculty prior to the beginning of classes. Broad distribution of the Agenda helps to foster a climate of open communication and to inform all faculty of the work of all committees and academic offices for the coming year. Presentation of the Agenda at the Fall workshop provides a forum for me to emphasize strategic goals, to characterize the challenges ahead of us for the coming year, and to focus the attention of the faculty on critical issues and key priorities. Committees are invited to modify the Agenda as they begin their work, responding to internal needs or to external opportunities. They know they are accountable to prepare a report at the end of the year summarizing what they have accomplished, so they modify the Agenda carefully.

At faculty meetings, the chairpeople of committees report to the faculty on progress toward completing the goals identified in the Agenda. Minutes of committee meetings are distributed broadly around campus, and all actions to be taken by the faculty-as-a-whole are processed through the Faculty Council for placement on the agenda of faculty meetings. Faculty Council, a group of six faculty elected by their peers to serve with the Dean as the academic strategic planning body, thereby monitors the flow of information and progress towards achieving goals set forth in the Academic Agenda.

At the end of the academic year, the chairpeople of the committees submit a report of the year's accomplishments. Reports identify Agenda items that were completed, those that are still in process, those that could not or should not be completed, and new items that need to be addressed during the subsequent academic year. Copies of annual reports are also disseminated in the Fall, showing all faculty what their committees have and have not accomplished.

The Benefits

Combined with minutes of faculty committee meetings, the Academic Agenda and annual reports constitute a complete historical record of faculty action. The overall goal of this approach to faculty governance is to link faculty governance to institutional priorities. As we assess the effectiveness of this system in achieving its goal through the reaccreditation self-study process, we are learning something about institutional effectiveness and generating patterns of evidence to demonstrate support for several reaccreditation standards, including Criterion Five.

Relationships with internal constituencies are critical in promoting a healthy, thriving campus community. Linking faculty governance to institutional planning and priorities encourages communication and strengthens relationships with internal constituencies. The development, maintenance, and continual assessment of a system that creates these linkages is one of the most important leadership duties of the chief academic officer. Over time, an investment in building these linkages strengthens the institution itself and increases capacity for responding to external challenges. For me, demonstrating integrity in practices and relationships requires this kind of investment.

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Faculty Governance: A Comprehensive Overhaul

Gary D. Wright

With increasing demands for accountability being made upon institutions of higher learning, faculty governance structures are feeling the need for higher levels of effectiveness in bringing about institutional improvement and monitoring institutional integrity. Using recent changes in faculty governance at The Cleveland Institute of Music (CIM) as a model, this discussion will suggest ways in which goals for more effective governance within private institutions of higher education may be identified, along with a methodology for implementation.

A Litmus Test for Existing Governance

The first order of business involves administering a litmus test upon an institution's existing committee structure, particularly in terms of the openness of communication among faculty, administration, and Trustees. Of particular interest should be the effectiveness of the institution's decision-making apparatus already in place, as well as the feedback mechanism that drives institutional improvement. Such an evaluation may be conducted through an honest response to the following four questions:

1. How does the faculty governance structure support the institution's ability to carry out its mission?
2. What is the precise role of the faculty in its relationship with the administration, President, and Board of Trustees?
3. What is the existing faculty committee organization, from where was it derived, and why was it structured this way?
4. Is the current governance structure meeting the goals that were set for it at inception, and are those goals the same as those of today?

All of these questions are related. For example, the authority invested in the faculty by the Board (question 2) drives the creation of the committee flowchart (question 3). Natural and organic changes in the mission statement over the years (question 1) will cause the governance structure to become obsolete if it is not shepherded through a similar process (question 4).

When these four questions were reflected upon by CIM in 1994, a process was set into motion that resulted in a comprehensive overhaul of the existing faculty governance infrastructure at CIM. The existing model was not meeting goals that were contemporaneous with the mission of the school, and many faculty legislative initiatives were disappearing into an administrative "black hole." There follows a brief encapsulation of the responses to these questions as they pertain to The Institute:

☐ Faculty Governance and the Mission Statement

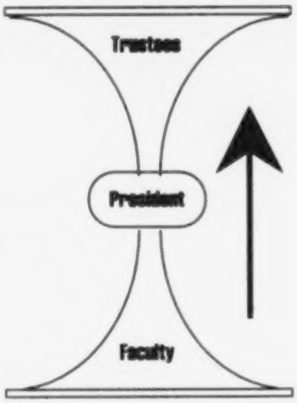
With the NCA self-study process well under way in 1994, it was becoming obvious to the Dean and others that the existing faculty committee flow chart was hindering the process rather than facilitating it. Being a conservatory of music, The Institute has always had, in its 75 year history, a clear sense of mission. While Trustees had scrutinized the mission statement at a recent Board retreat as a component of the self-study process, similar dialog had not occurred at the faculty level. One deficiency demanding rectification involved the absence of key faculty voices around the table in debate of issues directly at the heart of the mission. Indeed the resolution of such issues, or at least frank and open discussion of them, would be vital to a successful self-study. As an example of shoddy faculty representation, the issue of "Prep" will serve admirably.

The Institute has, in addition to tertiary programs offered to approximately 325 full-time students in the conservatory proper, a vital and integral Preparatory and Continuing Education program. The "Prep" area of CIM services nearly 2,000 students ranging from ages three to 70, and boasts a world-renowned Suzuki training program, along with a Young Artist Program that allows gifted young musicians to enjoy many of the benefits of a conservatory training. The CIM mission statement is worded in such a way that both the conservatory and preparatory areas are embraced. Inherent in The Institute's mission is the notion of a "seamless conservatory," and a primary goal of the current president has involved their growing side-by-side along a continuum. This manifests in the philosophy that all students will receive a professional musical training of the highest caliber, whether they are pursuing a doctoral degree in performance at the age of 30, or attending a Saturday morning Suzuki lesson at the age of five. Under the old governance framework, conservatory and preparatory committees were segregated; conservatory issues were dealt with by the conservatory, and preparatory issues likewise. According to the mission, however, there are no "conservatory" issues; there are only CIM issues.

Faculty/President/Trustee Interaction: Flattening the Hourglass

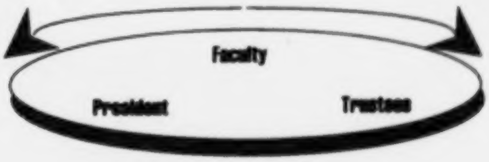
Faculty governance will not function without a clear mandate from the President and Board of Trustees as to the scope of faculty responsibility in the decision-making process. The existing mechanisms for faculty input into institutional governance at CIM, put into place in previous decades, were based upon the now obsolete model of an upward-flowing "Hourglass" (see Fig. 1), wherein faculty sent recommendations to the President, who then presented them to the Board.

Figure 1–*Traditional "Hourglass" Model*



In this era of heightened accountability, such a model has substantial drawbacks. A more effective model finds private institutions involving faculty with Board members directly, so that the collective expertise inherent in such a mix may be brought to bear more forthrightly upon issues at hand. During a decade of leadership under a visionary president, CIM has experienced a substantial growth in faculty/Board relations, particularly within the numerous Board committees that enjoy active faculty representation and participation. This new spirit of cooperation among faculty, President, and Trustees may be likened to a "roll up the sleeves" round table format (see Fig. 2). The hourglass picture that situates the President as "middle man" between a faculty perceived by the Board as idealistic, and a Board perceived by the faculty as fiscally draconian, is replaced by an open and honest attempt to face issues squarely by bringing all guns to bear upon them. The key word in making such a concept work is "trust."

Figure 2–*"Round Table" Model for Institutional Governance*



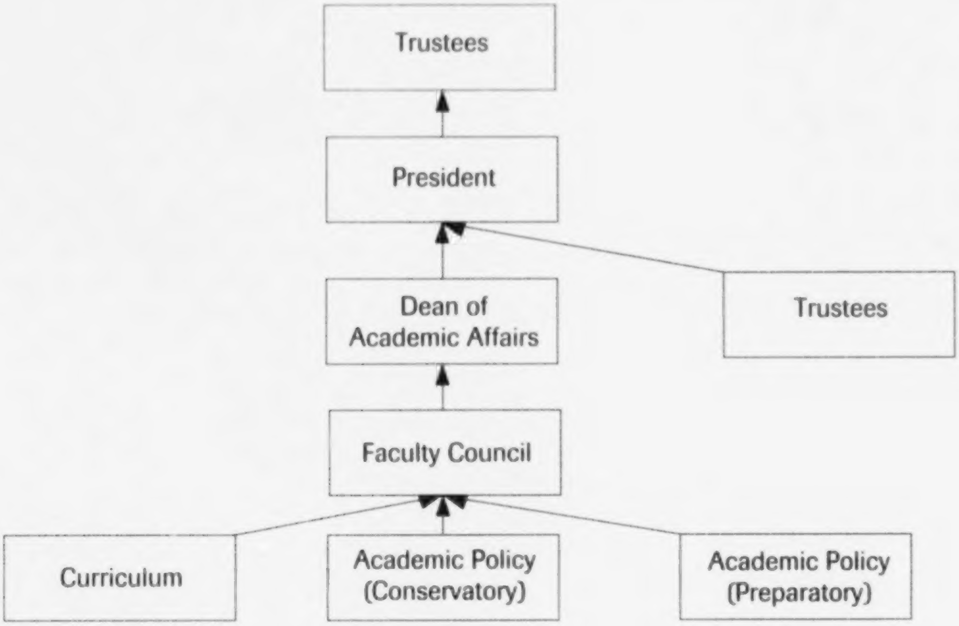
CIM's old governance model did not reflect this shift towards a desire for cross-fertilization of ideas among faculty, President, and Trustees. It had been set up in an era of that did not enjoy the same level of trust between faculty and administration that is enjoyed today.

Clearly the intent of the President has been to heighten the responsibility of the faculty in matters of institutional governance, and his mandates have clearly and unambiguously charted a course for such involvement. As the existing governance model provided very little room for such growth, they needed to be changed.

Existing Committee Structure

Prior to 1995, the committee structure at CIM (see Fig. 3) consisted of a Faculty Council that was a small advisory group entirely elected from the conservatory and preparatory faculty, an Academic Policy Committee (Conservatory) of all department heads plus three elected representatives, an Academic Policy Committee (Preparatory) that was entirely elected, a Curriculum Committee (Conservatory), and various ad hoc committees.

Figure 3–*Existing Committee Structure (Pre-1995)*



In this flow chart, one obvious problem presents itself. By virtue of the fact that separate academic committees were in existence, a "seam" between the two divisions of the school is reinforced, rather than eradicated.

According to the old charter, the Preparatory Academic committee also functioned as a Student Affairs Committee for the entire school. This group rarely, if ever, met. There was no formal student input. There was no formal input from the Case Western Reserve University Music Department, with whom CIM enjoys a fruitful and vital relationship called the Joint Music Program. Recommendations from both Academic Policy committees were ostensibly fed up to Faculty Council, where they would be discussed before being passed in turn along to the President. This process did not function, partially because there was no effective mechanism for tracking recommendations and legislative action, and partially because the group rarely met. Furthermore, the notion of having to debate issues twice, once in Academic Policy and subsequently in Faculty Council, stymied the process significantly. Nevertheless, this "checks and balance" duplication of effort was deemed essential in a past era marked by mistrust by faculty towards administration.

That representation by all constituencies is of paramount importance need not be dwelt upon. Nevertheless it sometimes proves a more ticklish dilemma than otherwise would be expected. A somewhat unique situation exists at The Institute with its high reliance upon the mentorship and expertise of over thirty adjunct faculty whom are members of The Cleveland Orchestra, including all principal chairs and the Concertmaster. Given the degree of excellence they impart to the CIM experience, their voice is weighted rather more heavily than one might otherwise expect from a part-time contingency. Indeed the very fabric of CIM would not be recognized without their presence. It stands as an oddity, therefore, that their presence was neither particularly solicited, nor facilitated (given the tight Cleveland Orchestra schedule), in the old system of governance.

Since the governance re-structuring at CIM, student representation has been markedly more effective due to the efforts of the Dean of Student Affairs in re-invigorating the Student Forum. This committee meets weekly under his mentorship, and their ideas and concerns are brought both to the Faculty Senate and to the President's Executive Staff. Feedback is provided to the Forum via the Dean of Student Affairs. This interaction completes the "top-bottom-top" communication chain, from Trustee through to student, that has been the goal at CIM, as mandated by the President.

☐ Goals of Faculty Governance

The forces that steered the construction of CIM's old governance edifice were rooted in a past that did not enjoy the high levels of trust and cooperation among faculty, administration, and Trustees that is currently the norm. In fact, the primary goal of this faculty-driven construct involved safety and protection of faculty vested interest from an administration that was perceived as being less than totally forthright upon occasion. The fragmentation of committees, and inherent redundancies, built into the system were established to safeguard the well-being of The Institute, at least as many faculty perceived it. Indeed it is interesting to note that, in addition to the CIM committees mentioned above, there existed also a Faculty Association that was not directly affiliated with The Institute, but served to voice faculty concerns collectively to the administration. This is as close to a labor union that CIM has ever tread, and its existence is evidence of a time past when such a guild was felt to be needed. This association became inactive during the tenure of the current President.

When The Institute embarked upon its self-study of faculty governance in 1994, and decided upon a course of reform, it compiled a new set of goals and considerations that would better serve the mission:

— to increase accountability

— to better represent all constituencies

— to embrace trustee stewardship and involvement

— to establish mechanisms for institutional Total Quality Improvement

— to collectively address issues of institutional integrity

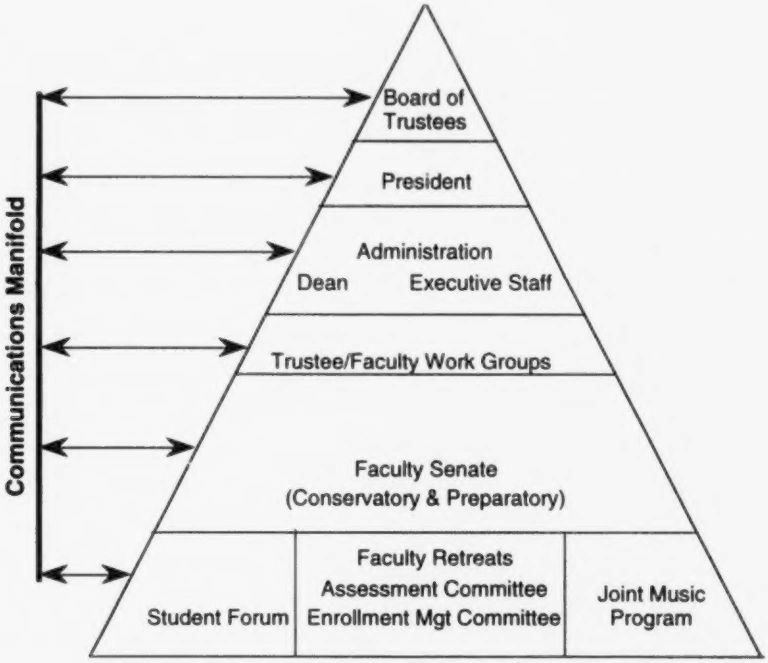
Building a Better Flow Chart

The following questions may provide food for thought as a prelude to undertaking faculty governance reform:

- What characteristics best define the unique profile of this institution?
- How does the governing body maintain institutional integrity?
- How does the governance structure adequately and effectively embrace all relevant constituencies of the institution?
- To whom are accountability issues ultimately addressed?
- How is institutional change directly related to the governing process?
- How is the effectiveness of institutional change measured?
- How are the results of institutional change fed back into the governing process?
- How are legislative actions tracked to fruition?

As a result of deliberating upon the above points, CIM administration and faculty worked together in generating a new model for faculty governance that might better serve to harvest a collective faculty voice and steer it into the mix. The concept of a pyramid analogy (see Fig. 4) began to emerge, with its broad base of support, clearly delineated apex, and several layers *all contained within the same construct.* Lines of communication were considered to be essential, and the "manifold" analogy came to embody the ideal (albeit in practical terms only an ideal). Through the fall of 1994, the following flow chart was devised:

Figure 4 - *New Faculty Governance Structure*



Pyramid Concept

The intent in devising this model was to move away from the dated uni-directional "algorithm" flow chart towards a more holistic and interactive paradigm. After experimenting with several models, it was decided that a pyramid analogy best describes the new system's intent:

- the effectiveness of the structure depends upon as broad a base as possible;
- it places the President and Trustees at the apex, while providing a broad underpinning (vis. many layers of accountability);
- all constituencies are housed within the same structure, and are vital components of the construction

The reforms being considered by CIM were codified and presented to the faculty (see "Suggested Timeline" on page 58) in a Charter document entitled "Faculty Governance Policy," which subsequently will be excerpted in this discussion. In this Charter, the following paragraph deals with the notion of "pyramid:"

Any and all matters brought for discussion to the Faculty Senate will be addressed in a bottom-up "pyramid" methodology that embraces the concept of bringing to the table all pertinent information and viewpoints at the ground level necessary for intelligent and thoughtful discourse. To this end, ex-officio members of the group will be asked to present their perspectives on any problems in the first instance of debate. As an example, the Comptroller may be solicited for his/her perspective on a new course offering in terms of its fiscal implications, and would in turn present an informed opinion to the Senate as debate on the new course proceeds. Along the same lines, the Registrar would be invited to present his/her perspective on the credit-load implications of a new required course to the undergraduate curriculum as it is debated by the Senate. In this fashion, any policies adopted by the Senate will be based upon a broader understanding of the delicate balances inherent in the successful functioning of The Institute.

This embodies a significant departure from the past, wherein a course might be approved by the faculty without any knowledge of its fiscal ramifications, only to have the course "nuked" by a seemingly adversarial administration. On the other hand, the system proposed above provides the faculty with a "taste of cold steel," empowering them to take a greater responsibility and accountability for the overall well-being of the institution. The CIM faculty enthusiastically has embraced this heightened responsibility, as manifested in the Faculty Senate, with compassion and wisdom.

A Methodology for Change

There follows a brief synopsis of CIM's approach in its bid to comprehensively overhaul faculty governance. It begins as a set of responses to several pertinent "Who" questions:

- **Who should drive the change?** The Institution's Chief Academic Officer, in consultation with the president and executive staff. CIM's Dean of Academic Affairs, newly appointed in 1994, spearheaded the initiative, largely due to [i] his previous tenure as Chairman of the Academic Policy Committee; and [ii] his assumption of the duties of Self-Study Coordinator.
- **Who should draft the new charter?** A working faculty committee (small) under the advisement of the CAO. At CIM, the Dean worked closely with the Dean of Student Affairs, the Assistant to the President, members of the Enrollment Management Committee (including the Registrar and Admissions Director), and sought advice from several key faculty voices. At all times the President was kept apprised of developments in the new charter.
- **Who should oversee legal ramifications?** Legal approval of both the charter, and the suggested timetable for implementation (see below) should be sought by the institution's legal counsel. In the case of CIM, legal mentorship was provided by a senior Trustee and Chairman of the Personnel Committee of the Board of Trustees.

- **Who should approve the change?**
  - Majority vote of existing governing body(ies)
  - Majority vote of full faculty
  - Signature of the President
  - Presented to the Board of Trustees for their information. (NB - it is not necessarily within the prerogative of the Board of Trustees to approve the infrastructure for faculty governance; in the case of CIM, substantial communication was maintained with, and assistance solicited from, Trustees throughout the process. As a result, several key Trustees were already well-versed in the comprehensive changes that eventuated.)
- **Who should be represented?**
  - Broad ongoing representation of senior faculty (CIM benevolently conscripts all Heads of Department to serve)
  - Small elected contingent, with revolving terms
  - Ex Officio (non-voting):
    - Trustee (preferably involved in matters of curriculum; at CIM the Trustee also chairs the Educational Policy Committee of the Board of Trustees)
    - President's Representative (at CIM, the Assistant to the President)
    - Administrative Directors of Significant Divisions (at CIM, the Director of Preparatory and Continuing Education)
    - Chief Academic Officer (at CIM, the Dean of Academic Affairs; this officer should also coordinate the faculty governing body and work closely with the elected faculty chairman)
    - Senior Administrative Officers (at CIM, the Dean of Student Affairs, Registrar, Director of Admissions)
    - Invited Staff/Administration [to provide specialized insight] (upon occasion, the CIM Faculty Senate has been visited by the Comptroller, Director of Personnel, Head Librarian, Director of Audio Service, and others)
    - Invited Representation from Other Institutions (CIM and Case Western Reserve University have agreed to provide representation at each other's governing body *when warranted by specific agenda items*)
    - Student Representation (CIM has decided NOT to allow direct student representation; however the effectiveness of communication between the Senate and the Student Forum through the efforts of the Dean of Student Affairs has alleviated the necessity for this)

Focus on Institutional Integrity

Many at CIM have remarked upon the manner in which agenda items brought to table are dealt with more thoroughly and effectively, since the inception of the Faculty Senate over one year ago. In particular, sensitive issues that go towards defining and setting the standards for institutional integrity are handled with a higher degree of acumen. For the purposes of this discussion, the author feels that sharing several specific issues that have arisen recently on the Senate docket may serve to illustrate the manner in which the revised Senate has been effective in confronting sensitive issues that deal with integrity. The three examples below all spawned invigorating debate:

- **Digital Tape Editing**
    - *Issue:* Should the CIM Audio Service provide students with digitally edited tapes of their performances for audition and competition purposes.
    - *Debate:* Digital editing allows for "mistakes" to be removed without aural evidence, but does not give an honest representation of the student's performance. However, virtually most student musicians are submitting digitally edited tapes these days; ought CIM to disadvantage its students by not allowing this service? Tapes are meant only to get the student "in the door;" winners of competitions and auditions still need to produce the goods in person.
    - *Result:* Issue is still pending.

- **Young Artists in Concerto Competition**
    - *Issue:* Should Young Artist students enrolled through the Preparatory and Continuing Education program (i.e., not yet "conservatory" students, but nevertheless valued members of the greater CIM student body) be allowed to compete in the prestigious conservatory concerto competition, thereby taking the places of conservatory students.
    - *Debate:* This competition, held every semester, produces four winners that get to perform a concerto with the orchestra the following semester. Recently, two of the four winners were Young Artists. Concern was voiced by some conservatory faculty that these students should "wait their turn", and enter once they are members of the conservatory. However, a resounding shout of "May the best man (woman) win!" was heard as the consensus.
    - *Result:* Senate ruled that Young Artists are entitled to compete alongside their conservatory colleagues.

- **Extracurricular Contractual Employment**
    - *Issue:* Should CIM students be allowed to engage in contractual employment with regional orchestras.
    - *Debate:* There has been a substantial problem with CIM students missing school orchestral rehearsals, and other curricular obligations, in order to gain professional experience (and money) by playing in regional orchestras. Such experience goes directly to The Institution's stated mission statement, and embodies exactly the sort of training that CIM hopes to provide for its students. On the other hand, students cannot jeopardize their school experience in order to take professional employment; nor can the school allow its orchestral program to be impaired by excessive absenteeism.
    - *Result:* Senate passed a Motion giving the Dean of Academic Affairs substantial authority to curtail outside student employment. This legislation places the lion's share of responsibility for endorsing outside employment upon the shoulders of the major studio teacher.

A New Charter for the Senate

There appear below selected excerpts from the Motion for a new "Faculty Governance Policy" that was presented to CIM's Academic Policy Committee, the Faculty Advisory Council, the Executive Staff, and the President, for their approval in Fall of 1994. Key components of the Charter are provided at the end of this paper.

The Motion began as follows:

> As of January 1, 1995, all existing faculty bodies of Faculty Governance at The Cleveland Institute of Music, either active or inactive, will be replaced by the **Faculty Senate** of The Cleveland Institute of Music.

The document articulated to the faculty the following five goals:

1. To adopt a system of faculty governance that more accurately reflects current practice over the last ten years (i.e., only one committee had been meeting effectively prior to this time; therefore, have only one committee "on the books," but with proper representation).
2. To embrace both the Conservatory and Preparatory programs of The Institute in a more unified and "seamless" forum for faculty views and concerns.
3. To re-embrace The Cleveland Orchestra faculty in the governing of The Institute by scheduling meetings around the schedule of The Cleveland Orchestra.
4. To provide a system of tracking legislative action taken by the faculty governing body.
5. To better define the role and relationship between the faculty and the President in the governance of The Institute.

Conclusion

The comprehensive overhaul of faculty governance undertaken at The Cleveland Institute of Music, begun in 1994, has been highly successful by all indicators. It was initiated as a component of the Self-study process, and evolved organically from broad faculty, administrative, and Trustee input. Central to its crafting was the establishment of new goals for effective governance that better reflect and support the current CIM mission statement. The restructuring process entailed the abolition of an archaic system of multiple and largely dysfunctional committees, and their replacement by a single and holistic governing body. Legislation passed by this body is sent to the President for his signature, and copies of all legislation so enacted is readily available in appropriate locations. The Senate's broad representation makes it a particularly effective vehicle for matters that pertain to institutional integrity.

Appendices

Appendix A: *A Suggested Timetable for Change*

Appendix B: *Key Components of the New Charter for the Faculty Senate*

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Appendix A.

A Suggested Timetable for Change

It is imperative that a *realistic* timetable for implementing any governance overhaul be announced, and subsequently adhered to. CIM accomplished its reforms during one semester. This excludes the process of *arriving at the decision to change*, be that through faculty retreats, task forces, governance sub-committees, or whatever institutional soul-searching mechanisms may be devised to chart the changes. The following timetable, based upon a Fall semester, tracks closely with that used by CIM during its transition:

September...

- The Dean of Academic Affairs (CAO) meets with the President and his/her Executive Staff to discuss the authoring of a working draft for changes in faculty governance.
- Work on a new Charter for Faculty Governance is begun by the Dean, working closely with key senior faculty and the Chair of the current faculty governing body(ies).
- Faculty governing bodies are notified by the Dean of the initiatives afoot, and the methodology is presented and discussed.

October...

- The working draft of a new Charter is completed; "early returns" are solicited from the President, his/her Executive Staff, and other key administration and faculty.
- The new Charter is presented to the faculty governing body(ies) for their input.

November...

- Faculty governing bodies discuss and modify as appropriate the working draft of the Charter; subsequently it is voted upon for approval by each committee, based upon any amendments that are forthcoming.
- Highest faculty governing body votes for approval of the new Charter, and for submission to the President for approval.

December...

- Revised Charter for Faculty Governance is distributed to the entire faculty for consideration.
- A full meeting of the faculty is called, at which time the new Charter for Faculty Governance is explained and discussed; questions are addressed by the Dean and chairpersons of all existing faculty governance committees.
- A ballot for adoption of the new Charter for Faculty Governance, reflecting any and all amendments, is distributed to the entire faculty. (At CIM, the ballot indicated that only "NO" votes needed to be returned to the Office of the Dean; non-returned ballots indicated a "YES" vote).
- The results of the ballot are reported to the President, and a notice is sent to the entire faculty announcing the result.
- The Board of Trustees is informed of the changes at the next full meeting.

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Appendix B.

Key Components of the New Charter for the Faculty Senate

Several key components of the Charter are reproduced below:

The Faculty Senate will enter into a more clearly defined relationship with the President of The Institute in all matters of Faculty Governance that are appropriate to the Charter of the Senate, and will include:

- establishment and maintenance of an educational philosophy for The Institute, in conjunction with the President and the Board of Trustees;
- all matters affecting curriculum and academic programs;
- all matters affecting student performance, evaluation, and outcomes;
- proactive role in faculty/staff/Board of Trustees relations;
- relationship with Case Western Reserve University and the Joint Music Program;
- faculty evaluation;
- issues of performance at The Institute, including the orchestral program, opera, recitals, and master classes;
- faculty governance;
- overseeing of support service policies, such as audio recording, accompanying, and library, in conjunction with the Heads of these departments.

There will be a clear delineation between the academic legislative body as manifested in the Faculty Senate, and the executive authority as manifested in the Office of the President. Any legislative actions falling under the headings described above need first to be approved by vote by the Faculty Senate, and subsequently approved by signature of the President.

The Faculty Senate will consist of all Heads of Department, or their designee, at the Conservatory and Preparatory levels, with a minimum of two and a maximum of four elected representatives, 50% of whom will have as their primary area of specialization teaching in the Preparatory area. Each member will serve a two-year term, with elections being staggered by one year. Elections will take place at the annual meeting of the full faculty held at the beginning of each academic year. (Note: the current elected representatives of the Faculty Advisory Council will be invited to participate in the new Faculty Senate for the remainder of this academic year.)

The Chairman of the Faculty Senate will be elected by the Senate at its first meeting of each academic year, and will serve a two-year term. There will be no term limit on the Chair.

The Office of the Dean will coordinate the activities of the Faculty Senate, and will assemble and distribute minutes, agendas, and all documentation pertaining to the successful functioning of the Senate. The Chairman will meet with the Dean prior to each meeting to discuss agenda items.

The Dean, as the Chief Academic Officer, will serve as the primary liaison with the President, and will advise the President and the Executive Staff of significant agenda items of the Faculty Senate prior to each meeting.

Legislative actions taken by the Faculty Senate will consist of Motions that have been voted upon and approved by a quorum of voting members. A quorum of the Faculty Senate will consist of no fewer than 15 members, not including the Chairman. The Chairman will normally abstain from voting; however the Chair's vote will be the determining one in any deadlock. In the absence of a quorum, legislative action on Motions may be taken by a written ballot distributed to all Faculty Senate members.

Motions may be brought to the table by any voting member, except the Chairman. All motions must be submitted in writing to the Office of the Dean at least two weeks prior to any scheduled meeting, along with all supporting documentation. All motions and supporting documentation will be distributed to all voting members and ex-officio members of the Faculty Senate one week prior to any meeting.

Motions that are passed by the Faculty Senate will be presented singly (i.e., each on a separate page) to the President for signature or for further action. Further action is defined as either discussion with the President's Executive Staff, or for return to the Faculty Senate for further debate. In the latter case, the President or the Assistant to the President will articulate to the Chairman prior to the subsequent meeting the concerns inherent in the withholding of approval, and will then present the viewpoints of the Office of the President at the subsequent meeting of the Faculty Senate.

Motions that are signed by the President will be bound in separate volumes by academic years and housed in the Office of the Dean, the Office of the President, and the Library. The Office of the Dean will set into motion all logistics necessary for the implementation of approved Motions. A report on Executive actions will be made at the following meeting.

Minutes of the Faculty Senate will be presented to the President and distributed to the entire faculty.

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Integration of Part-Time Faculty into the Campus Culture

Carol C. Karrer
Burt Schiavo

The NCA *Handbook of Accreditation* considers both full-and part-time faculty when defining the threshold requirements for an institution. While looking for an essential element of core full-time faculty, the NCA wisely avoids "a precise mathematical formula" for indicating an optimum ratio of full-time to part-time faculty. To implicitly associate "quality" with the percentage of full-timers would not only denigrate part-timers, as Gappa and Leslie argue in their recent analysis of part-timers in higher education,[1] it would constrain member institutions where the planned employment of part-timers contributes to meeting a socially desirable mission, delivering useful programs, and serving the needs of nontraditional students.

In order to meet the mission of the institution and its B.S.N. completion program, [2] Franklin employs local specialists and professionals as part-time faculty, whom we call Adjuncts. The issue is not how Franklin and similar institutions stretch scarce resources to serve our students at an affordable tuition, but whether they are being served by a unified, committed, well-qualified faculty delivering a coherent curriculum. Although our *University Handbook* includes sections dealing with graduate, undergraduate, and adjunct faculty, the same topics are considered for each group. The contents and provisions differ considerably, based on a consideration of institutional resources, market factors, fairness, and equity: "Policies that are important to the well-being and performance of full-time faculty are also important to part-time faculty."[3]

The climate and effect created by these provisions, however, is determined by the relationship among core and adjunct faculty and the environment fostered by academic and other officers within the institution, i.e., to make sure we value and integrate the respected professionals serving as adjuncts. Issues that need to be discussed in any institution are: Who are the part-time faculty? Why use part-time faculty? And, What strategies enhance the integration of part-time faculty into the campus? One of us will address the administrative perspective on the questions and the other will concentrate on the relationship between full- and part-time faculty within the faculty.

Franklin University is one of thousands of institutions of higher education nationwide that employ the 270,000 part-time faculty, who constitute 35-38 percent of all faculty.[4] Our student body epitomizes the nontraditional learners who make up the majority of the 12,500,000 students in higher education in the U.S. At Franklin 80 percent of our students attend part-time; 70 percent work full-time; our undergraduates average 32 years of age; they are 55 percent female; and, study applied programs such as Business, Computer Science, and Nursing, which account for 70 percent of our degree-seeking population. Two-thirds of Franklin's classes are offered evenings, weekends, or off-campus. Located in downtown Columbus and serving commuters within the belt of Interstate-270, which encompasses a service and internationally-oriented economy, Franklin's mission, students, programs, and access to a talented pool of educated practitioners militate for the employment of a high percentage of adjunct faculty.

Nationally, public and private research and doctorate-granting institutions that bear the primary responsibility for advancing the "scholarship of discovery" and the "scholarship of integration" in Boyer's terms [5], employ 15-24 percent part-time faculty. Related to the need to release faculty for research, some departments at such institutions employ part-timers and graduate teaching assistants at a higher percentage than some community colleges, which average 54 percent part-timers. Public and private comprehensive colleges and universities and liberal arts colleges fall in between, at 26-42 percent part-timers.[6] Service to traditional age, particularly full-time and residential students, increases the need for readily available faculty to play traditional teaching, mentoring, and advising roles. At Franklin the advising function is shared between the Program Chairpersons and readily-available professional advisors we call Student Service Associates. In addition, our students make extensive use of telephone, FAX, and e-mail access to interact frequently with their instructors. With an adult, part-time student body studying applied curricula in a student-centered (rather than an instructor- or discipline-centered) and experiential learning environment, Franklin must peg its tuition against that at state-supported universities and community colleges, especially since our students are often self-supporting or reliant on employer reimbursement.

Thus for reasons responsive to mission, location, student profile, educational program, and economy, Franklin employs 140-150 adjuncts to provide up to 60 percent of its instruction within a context created by 50 full-time faculty and a lean academic structure. The full- time faculty serve as teaching deans, program chairpersons, and experienced teacher-mentors to create an academic dialogue with those who practice the professions the curricula address. Into the mix we add students who often qualify, or seek to qualify, as junior practitioners. The credibility of our programs depends heavily on the reputation of the high-level practitioners who constitute the majority of our faculty. As Gappa and Leslie conclude,

> These experts are mature, experienced, insightful, and sophisticated in the practice of their art or profession; they are able to relate theory and practice in unusually credible fashion. Adult students, in particular, consistently express appreciation for the ability of part-time faculty to bring concrete examples and vignettes from their own experience to class.[7]

Although we are only now systematically building the data base, personal knowledge reveals adjunct faculty who are managing partners in accounting firms, corporate executives, elected officials, judges, artists, authors, lawyers, entrepreneurs, consultants, clinicians, hospital administrators, nurses, and computer engineers. Not only do these individuals add "real" world value to programs, they offer access to state-of-the-art equipment, internships, job openings, corporate support, and invaluable corrections to those who serve as external evaluators for assessing the outcomes of our programs. They span boundaries:

> the value and value-adding roles of professionals who are part-time faculty are most apparent when it is understood that they are a primary source by which appropriate norms, values, and information are inserted directly into the curriculum.[8]

Their willingness to advise upon, and develop the curriculum allows the full- timers and the institution to "explore markets for new programs, expand markets for existing programs, refine programs to include new specialties, experiment in the development of courses, limit costs, and, in general, control risks."[9] When adjuncts are asked to engage in course and program development, we compensate them accordingly.

Thus, the adjunct faculty play a key role in our "partnership with Central Ohio's business and professional community." They go into the classroom as prime examples of what Donald Shon called "reflective practitioners."[10] In our MBA program we have expanded on this relationship through our "Executive in Residence" program, which has involved teams from several local organizations such as Honda, Mt. Carmel Health, Nationwide Insurance, and the Greater Columbus Chamber-of Commerce in the definition, development, and delivery of courses dealing with finance, marketing, information management, and quality management. In each case they worked with a full- time faculty as liaison for teaching and administrative concerns.

If we have adequately addressed the questions of "who" and "why," we can turn to some policies and practices that enhance the integration of this valuable human resource into the intellectual life of the institution. Again, the simple but profound truth is that there is only *one* faculty at each institution responsible for instruction and curriculum. It includes, and will continue to include at all institutions, individuals with varying terms and percentages of employment and varying assignments. What should we do to assure that faculty's unity, quality, and effectiveness Gappa and Leslie provide an excellent guide, including forty-three recommendations, details on exemplary programs at Eastern Kentucky, Burlington Community College, Cuyahoga Community College, and St. Mary's College in California. We will focus on three modest examples from Franklin of how equitable treatment of adjuncts may require different treatment: performance evaluation and merit pay for adjuncts; fringe benefits for eligible adjuncts; and, the design of instructional workshops for adjuncts.

Adjunct Merit Pay

Four years ago Franklin launched a merit pay system that in stages would reward high-level faculty performers with a bonus in July approaching 15 percent by 1997-98. It also moves the institution from annual contracts to three-year contracts earned for performance and years of service. Two years ago the new faculty Performance Review system that supports this process was recommended by a joint faculty /administrative committee and approved by the Board of Trustees. It defines Essential Requirements for faculty, which determine contract renewal and encourages Meritorious Activities, which determine. Length of contract and level of merit. The results are documented in a portfolio, which is evaluated by the assistant dean in one's division.

During 1994-95, in consultation with the standing Adjunct Faculty Committee, the model was modified to include adjuncts. Built on student evaluations using the same forms, a similar three-step Classroom Observation by Program Chairpersons (who select, hire, and supervise adjuncts), the expectations in the categories of teaching effectiveness, professional development, and university/community service and for meritorious activity were scaled to a level which while still significant, was more appropriate for adjuncts employed full-time elsewhere. In July 1995, one-third of the adjuncts (44 out of 126) were eligible and recommended by Program Chairpersons to the Assistant Deans for merit bonuses equal to 4, 6, or 8 percent of their gross pay for 1994-95. Since this was the initial administration, we expect more adjuncts to participate and qualify this year. Incidentally, Gappa and Leslie found only one department chairperson at all the institutions they visited who consistently compared student evaluations for full- and part-time instructors. The data at Franklin for Fall 1995 and typical of other years shows the "Strongly Agree" and "Agree" ratings from students for full-timers to be 62 percent "Strongly Agree" and 34 percent "Agree," while adjuncts are 50 percent and 35 percent.

Adjuncts who have taught cumulatively three trimesters and a minimum of 12 credit hours (mostly four- credit courses are taught), attained excellent ratings, participated in Classroom Observation, and documented accomplishments in a mini-portfolio are deemed eligible. In 1995-96, we expect half of the adjuncts to qualify for 6, 8, or 10 percent merit bonuses. Now that we have extended the merit terms to adjuncts, we will find a way to provide annual or extended contracts to adjuncts, some of whom have been recognized for five, ten, and even twenty years of continuous service.

Adjunct Fringe Benefits

Although adjuncts had been receiving some benefits over the last few years, it took the publication of a new University Handbook for us to realize that it would be useful to summarize adjunct fringe benefits. The Director of Personnel and the Adjunct Faculty Committee enhanced, compiled, and disseminated this benefit list not only to current adjuncts but to the Program Chairpersons, who may have not been fully aware of them. The summary includes benefits that parallel but differ from those afforded full- timers: voluntary annuity and tax shelter plans; non-University-supported health and life insurance opportunities through Mutual of Omaha and the National Adjunct Faculty Guild (membership in the Guild costs $39 per year!, sick leave (one week per class per trimester); professional development support (usually up to $450 per adjunct per annum); a training stipend of $50 per session to attend a University-sponsored workshop; Library privileges; free parking and mileage to off-campus sites; bookstore and computer discounts; tuition remission for a spouse, child, or step-child at one course per course taught; statutory benefits; a published pay schedule; and direct deposit. Pay varies based on years of service and the level of ones degree, with a differential for day, weekend, and off-campus teaching. In most, non-emergency situations, notice of class assignments are made 6-8 weeks before classes begin and cancellations or reassignments are made 2-4 weeks before the trimester. Our students are reluctant to register until they know who's teaching, and we are extremely reluctant to change a teaching assignment once posted.

Instructional Workshops

As indicated above, adjuncts have received a stipend for attending University-sponsored workshops. Under the terms of a Lilly Foundation Grant, and subsequently the University has sponsored workshops focused on teaching adult and diverse learners, featuring such educators as Stephen Brookfield, Pat Cross, Uri Triesman, Herman Blake, and others. While attended by a few adjuncts, the Friday 8:00 to 2:00 o'clock scheduling was not ideal for them.

Recently, the University shifted focus and scheduling for these workshops to convenience and directly benefit adjuncts. Conducted by full-time graduate and undergraduate faculty, these now well attended (20 or adjuncts at a session) have been scheduled on Saturday mornings and have consciously focused on teacherly issues such as handling difficult situations in groups, stimulating critical thinking, designing and grading writing assignments, trouble-shooting small groups, and a menu of assignments to develop critical thinking. These sessions have been well-received by adjuncts as opportunities to discuss teaching, to interact in disciplinary and interdisciplinary groups, and to meet other adjuncts in an informal and relaxed situation.

These are three examples of how a slight shift in perspective applied to ongoing programs and procedures can result in the enhanced integration of respected and involved professionals who are intrinsically rewarded by sharing in the classroom their considerable knowledge and experience and who appreciate the opportunity to engage in a welcoming dialogue with those dedicated full time to teaching and learning.

Faculty Culture

Adjunct faculty want and need support for the details of the teaching effort. Faculty support staff can take the initiative to explain how to duplicate materials, make use of technology within the institution such as computer and audiovisual equipment, and where to find the mail. A full-time faculty mentor is very useful to explain how the course fits into the curriculum for the program major or discipline sequence in a service course. Further, they can help with decisions such as textbook choices in an effort to balance faculty autonomy with student's needs within the context of the whole curriculum. Students appreciate continuity between courses and a seamless approach to the content and process of the major or discipline.

An orientation, both to the university and the discipline's organizational unit is essential. This should be both formal and informal. Inclusion in faculty meetings is an efficient use of time and money; the major barrier to its effectiveness is the need to compromise with meeting times. In a nontraditional setting, classes may meet all day, all evening, and all weekend. The question, then, is when to have the meeting? The presentation will identify other ways to enhance a sense of belonging for the adjunct faculty member and identify corresponding rewards for full- time faculty.

Footnotes

1. Judith M. Gappa and D. Leslie, *The Invisible Faculty: Improving the Status of Part-timers in Higher Education* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1993). Judith M. Gappa and D. Leslie. "The Part-Time Faculty Advantage," *Metropolitan Universities: An International Forum* 5 (1995): 91-102.

2. **The Franklin University Mission Statement.** Franklin University is a student-centered, independent regional institution of lifelong higher education, working in partnership with central Ohio's business and professional community in a global context. The University provides undergraduate and graduate students, who often work full or part time, both the breadth of knowledge and the career-focused applications required of a balanced education.

The University's offerings develop the creativity, flexibility, and independence of thought that enables learners to face challenges with confidence The University promotes excellence in teaching and the use of appropriate technology to deliver accessible, innovative, measurably effective learning, which integrates theory and practice in community-responsive programs.

The Nursing Program's Mission Statement. Service to people to promote health and wellness, and provide a milieu where healing can occur is the nurse's mission to society. The Nursing program fosters this mission through education founded on basic beliefs about people, their relationships in a diverse society and environment, health, and educational process.

The goals of the Nursing major program are to prepare a nursing generalist for professional nursing practice, provide a foundation for graduate study, and promote a holistic approach to health.

3. Gappa and Leslie. p 260

4. National Center for Education Statistics, *National Higher Education Statistics* (Fall 1989), Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Education, and cited in Gappa and Leslie (1993), p. 17 ff.

5. E.L. Boyer, *Scholarship Reconsidered: Priorities of the Professorial* (Princeton: The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 1990).

6. Gappa and Leslie, 1993.

7. Gappa and Leslie, p. 121.

8. A. Phelan, *Boundary-Spannin Professionals: Value-Addin Roles for Part-Time Faculty. Pratt Institute's Strategy to enhance its curriculum* (June, 1986), ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. E D 279 233, and cited in Gappa and Leslie, 1993.

9. Gappa and Leslie, 1993, p. 124.

10. Donald A. Schon, *The Reflective Practitioner: How Professionals Think and Act* (New York: Basic Books, 1983).

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Adjunct Faculty and Teaching/Learning at Pima Community College

Philip J. Silvers
Vivian Swearingen

Introduction

From 1990 to 1995, Pima Community College (PCC) felt compelled to focus on the role of adjunct faculty as a quality issue. The fifth largest multi-campus community college in the nation, PCC employed part-time faculty to teach 57 percent of its student credit hours. Two major influences prompted the College to study its use of part-time faculty: 1) the North Central evaluation team noted a concern over the extent of use of part-time faculty, and 2) some PCC part-time faculty were meeting to explore a bargaining unit to negotiate compensation and other issues.

This paper discusses the quality issues involving adjunct faculty, the processes PCC undertook to address adjunct faculty issues, the results, and the perceived strengths and weaknesses in the approach.

Quality Issues

Research findings and task force discussions at PCC identified seven key quality issues around adjunct faculty. The issues, almost identical to those identified by Parsons (1980), Gappa and Leslie (1993), and Roueche and others (1995), were:

- **Composition of adjunct faculty.** With 70,000 adjunct faculty teaching in the nation's community colleges, 58.2 percent of all instructors (Roueche and others 1995), the demographics, academic credentials, and work experience of part-time faculty are points of interest and concern.
- **Adjunct faculty and the community college mission.** Real-world experience, flexibility to fill-in at times and places where course sections are needed, and relatively low cost, make adjunct faculty particularly helpful in fulfilling the community college mission.
- **Recruitment, selection, and retention of adjunct faculty.** Concerns regarding teaching competence and demographic representativeness prompt attention to the ways in which colleges attract and screen candidates for part-time teaching positions.
- **Orientation and professional development.** Understanding of the community college mission and programs, quality in teaching and assessment practices, and consistency in college standards and practices require orienting and in-servicing of adjunct faculty.
- **Compensation, load-hour limits, and benefits.** Salary and benefits are seen as important in attracting and retaining quality part-time faculty. Equity and fairness (Leslie and Gappa 1994) are compelling issues for part-time faculty and department chairs (Silvers 1990). Load-hour limits imposed by the institution can be discouraging to those part-time faculty who wish to teach more hours.
- **Status and integration of adjunct faculty.** Specific policies (Leslie and Gappa 1994) and attitudes/practices that value their strategic role (Sommer 1994) help integrate part-time faculty into the institution and give them a sense of importance, respect, and bonding (Avakian 1995).
- **Evaluation.** Provisions for assessing the performance of adjunct faculty represent a major quality issue.

Addressing Quality Concerns: the Process at PCC

With the arrival of a new chancellor in 1990, the College quickly identified the role of part-time faculty as a major quality and political concern. In response, the College took the following steps:

☐ **Surveys of Adjunct Faculty and Department Chairs**

In August 1990, the College surveyed the 1200 adjunct faculty who had taught during the previous year and all 78 department chairs to determine the critical issues regarding part-time faculty and quality (Silvers 1990). Sixty percent of adjunct faculty and 80 percent of the department chairs responded within the requested two-week period. For adjunct faculty, the critical issues were compensation, hiring practices, continuity in teaching, a 6-hour load limit, and support systems. For department chairs, who were highly bullish on part-time faculty, the issues were pay equity and support systems for part-time faculty.

☐ **Analyses of Secondary Data**

In addition to the survey data, the Office of Research and Planning analyzed data on PCC's utilization of part-time faculty and data from peer institutions (other Arizona community colleges and the ten largest multi-campus systems in the U.S., Silvers 1991). Among the findings were: PCC utilized part-time faculty to teach 48.5 percent of its student credit hours at its permanent campuses and 56.6 percent overall. Part-time faculty represented 78.8 percent of its teaching force, teaching 60 percent of its course sections. PCC ranked fourth of ten Arizona community college districts in compensation of part-time faculty and 16 percent lower than Arizona's other large urban community college district

☐ **The Blue-Ribbon Task Force**

Once the research had been completed, the Chancellor empaneled a task force of influential department chairs, adjunct faculty leaders, and key college administrators (e.g., the EEO officer and the personnel director). After a presentation of the research results, the task force identified areas of critical concern that needed to be addressed. (See Quality Issues, above.) For each area identified, pairs of task force members volunteered to write "white papers," analyzing the issues and making recommendations. Working through each white paper, the task force developed consensus on a set of six recommendations and twenty-two objectives, which addressed areas of perceived need:

— Remuneration and benefits
— Professional development
— Recruitment, selection, and retention
— Status and support
— Evaluation
— Full-time and part-time faculty ratio (Pima Community College, Associate Faculty Task Force 1992; Hockaday and Silvers 1995).

Once the resources necessary to implement these recommendations became clear, the Chancellor met with the campus presidents to devise a plan to pay for the recommendations through greater efficiencies in course scheduling. The plan included the elimination of course duplication and raising the minimum class size to 18 district-wide. Shortly thereafter, the Board of Governors enthusiastically endorsed the recommendations. Members of the task force, including adjunct faculty, were present at the Board meeting to express support for the recommendations.

☐ **Evaluation of Implementation**

Three years after the Board approved the recommendations, the Chancellor again convened the Task Force with a twofold charge: 1) to evaluate the implementation of the 1992 recommendations, and 2) to identify additional recommendations that might be appropriate. Of the twenty-two objectives recommended, thirteen had been implemented, six had been partially implemented, and three had not been implemented. Among the objectives implemented were:

— Change in the designation of associate faculty to "adjunct."

— Increase the compensation to a competitive level. PCC adjunct faculty are currently the highest paid in all ten Arizona community college districts, and the College has given an annual increase at the same percentage rate as full-time faculty.

— An online adjunct faculty applicant pool and bank have been implemented and evaluated.

— Adjunct faculty are represented on the Faculty Senate and on key college committees.

— Both district and campus offices have adjunct faculty records that reflect courses taught and other duties assumed.

Some recommendations were deferred or only partially implemented pending the resolution of the department chair reorganization and have not been fully implemented. (The department chair reorganization was not implemented until 1995.) These recommendations included:

— Hiring adjunct faculty by department chairs for other duties.

— Regular consultations with adjunct faculty regarding student evaluations.

As the Task Force concluded its work, it made five additional recommendations:

1. Implementation of a "core" adjunct faculty, with tiered compensation for those who meet certain criteria, e.g., taking methods courses, length of service, excellent student evaluations.
2. An integrated professional development plan built around a core course, followed by two tiers of alternatives in instructional technology and assessment.
3. Improvements to the Adjunct Faculty Applicant Bank.
4. A demonstration of effective teaching before the first assignment.
5. A set of regulations and guidelines to make the use of adjunct faculty more consistent throughout the College district Pima Community College, Adjunct Faculty Task Force 1995).

The additional recommendations have been given to the Chancellor's Cabinet, which is currently in the process of evaluating them.

Strengths and Weaknesses of the Process

Several aspects of the process promoted the success of the effort:

- The chief executive officer led the process.
- Critical representation on the task force from adjunct faculty leaders, key department chairs, and college administrators.
- Research findings not only provided background but kept the project focused on issues critical to the major stakeholders.
- White papers framed the pros and cons of the issues from the viewpoints of the major constituents.
- A time-staged implementation plan enabled the College to focus on one issue at a time and to phase-in the increased costs.
- A resource plan that acknowledged realistically the full costs of the recommendations.
- Board approval, which signalled a long-term institutional commitment.
- A commitment to evaluation and follow-up—the implementation was to be evaluated in three years.

At the same time, several factors impeded the full implementation:

- Many of the recommendations were contingent upon resolution of the department chair reorganization, which took more than two years.
- The College was in process of decentralizing many of its functions from the district central office to the campuses. This process tended to work against institutionalizing other changes.
- There was no provision for an *annual* reporting of progress, nor incorporating the recommendations into the strategic planning process.

Summary and Conclusions

Internal and external forces prompted the College to take action on adjunct faculty as a quality issue. While other concurrent organizational changes slowed the implementation process, 13 of 22 objectives were implemented, six partially implemented, and three not implemented. The initial set of recommendations represented a good basis for assessing progress and refining a new stage of recommendations.

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Chapter III

Integrity and Accreditation: Improving Retention/Completion Rates

Curriculum for an Accelerated Baccalaureate Degree

Georgia E. Lesh-Laurie
Danny Martinez

Approximately two years ago CU-Denver began an arduous adventure that took more negotiating and partner shipping time than we anticipated, but which has yielded us benefits in excess of what we believed possible. This adventure was the development of a formal curriculum for an Accelerated Baccalaureate Degree Option that: 1) did not compromise the credit hour requirements for the baccalaureate degree; 2) yet, at the same time, would save students in excess of one-year in time; and 3) could save them and their families one year's tuition payments.

What we will describe is CU-Denver's program, because we believe that the trials and tribulations we encountered are "generic," and would have to be dealt with in any program one might choose to develop. Also, although we are an urban, commuter university we clearly believe that the ability to develop a viable program as quickly as we were able to do so, reflected the fact that we already had a strong working relationship with the school systems in the greater Denver area. We also believe that the uniquenesses that we built into our program are clearly items that every program needs to consider, whether you would adopt them into your program or not.

The germ of the idea for this program developed from our interviews with freshmen students who related to us how they often complete their high school graduation requirements in less than four years. Yet, they preferred to remain in high school because of athletic or other extracurricular activities. From both the Advanced Placement (AP) program and programs that we had developed (CU-Succeed Silver and Gold), we were also aware that some high school students may successfully complete college level work while they are in high school. We were also cognizant of public pressures to see colleges and high schools work more closely to reduce the time students take to complete a baccalaureate degree. Because of these, it was our hope that CU-Denver's accelerated baccalaureate program would develop as a seamless web of relationships between the high schools and our university to benefit both the students and their parents.

The primary objectives of the CAB Program are to enrich the learning experiences of students and enable them to plan a course of study that leads to college credit while still in high school. The program does not encourage early high school graduation or modify high school or traditional baccalaureate degree requirements. Furthermore, the program is intended to broaden the field of options students have to earn college credit, not limit them by interfering with or replacing existing programs such as AP and the International Baccalaureate (IB).

CU-Succeed Silver and Gold courses enable schools to include in their curricula content not offered by the AP or IB programs. Furthermore, they provide students who would not normally enroll in a school's AP or IB classes an equal opportunity to benefit from challenging, credit-granting courses.

To accomplish the CAB what CU-Denver did was to piggy-back existing AP courses (which in typical high schools often reflect only interested teachers subjects and thus have no curricular meaning), and the existing International Baccalaureate with our existing CU-Succeed programs. Using the CU-Succeed programs enabled us to engage a curriculum that made academic sense, that was predictable in terms of what would be offered and when, and that was a known entity to the area high schools. We made it clear to the high schools that we were not out to destroy AP or the International Baccalaureate. In fact, we wished to enhance them using our CU-Succeed programs.

The CU-Succeed Silver Program is an academic partnership between UCD and local area high schools that was developed in 1990 primarily as an attempt to increase the college attendance rate of students with academic potential, who were not serious about going to college after high school. Through the CU-Succeed Silver Program high school juniors and seniors have the opportunity to test their academic skills in a challenging university course offered in the familiar setting of their own high school. In addition to earning semester hours of university credit, students receive information about applying for admission to college and financial aid from CU-Denver student services personnel.

The CU-Succeed Silver program's curriculum consists of core curriculum (and additional lower division) offerings from various departments of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. The courses are co-taught by a CU-Denver faculty member and a master teacher from the host high school. Generally, CU-Succeed Silver courses are taught during one of the school's regularly scheduled periods and meet five days per week. Students spend three days with the CU-Denver instructor and two with the cooperating teacher. This schedule makes it possible for students to earn both university and high school credits, most of which also satisfy high school graduation requirements.

We mention this because in Denver students are not permitted to register only for college/university courses while in high school. Students must enroll for a minimum number of high school courses required by their respective high school district. This is one of the reasons CU-Succeed Silver was structured to use qualified high school teachers as co-teachers, and to have as many of the courses as possible count for high school credit.

Students in CU-Succeed are usually recommended by the teachers and counsellors of the host school. Approximately 50% of the program's enrollment is comprised of minority students. Some of these students are at risk academically, and many are unsure or apprehensive about going to college. The remaining 50% consists of average to high achievers whose enrollment is encouraged for the purpose of creating in each class the diversity and heterogeneity that students will encounter on a college campus.

CU-Succeed Silver began six years ago and has been carefully nurtured ever since. It has grown at a rapid and consistent rate and in the 1995-96 academic year, the program will offer 25 courses in 13 high schools with more than 400 students registered. CU-Succeed Silver has enjoyed amazing success and, as such, it provided us with an entree into the secondary schools. Approximately 75% of the program's participants now enroll in college after high school graduation.

The CU-Succeed Gold Program, the other major component of the CAB, offers university courses in the secondary schools to high achieving juniors and seniors who have completed most of their graduation requirements and are ready for the challenges of college-level course work. CU-Succeed Gold courses are taught by high school faculty who hold an honorarium faculty appointment in an academic department of CU-Denver's College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. Individuals granted an appointment possess the same scholarly qualifications as other adjunct faculty of the University, and they are reviewed, approved, and evaluated by the CU-Denver faculty of the discipline in which they teach.

The CU-Succeed Gold Program began in the Spring of 1994 with the offering of six math courses in six suburban high schools. In the 1995-96 academic year, the program will offer more than 50 courses in 21 high schools to approximately 900 students.

CU-Succeed is thus a major component of CU-Denver's Accelerated Baccalaureate Degree program. It has been expanded to allow students more freedom to enroll in these courses if their parents wish them to do so. The program continues to require substantial institutional and foundation support. Yet, it seems clear that locally the word is out that a major university has a vested interest in its community and is willing to make a concerted effort to pave a path to its door for high school students whose backgrounds do not include a cultural tradition of college.

Once we had accomplished each of the various scenarios mentioned, we finally released our chancellor to announce the CAB program. This occurred during the Spring Semester, 1994. He announced it at a Board of Regents meeting in a small town in the southwest corner of the state, at least a five hour drive from Denver. We are quite certain that we have no undergraduate students from this town. Yet, the result was amazing. We were forced to call a press conference the next day on our own campus and the phones simply didn't stop ringing. Yet, we hadn't really done anything unusual or out of the ordinary. We had however addressed, clearly and concisely, a concern that the public perceived to be a problem, and we had developed a marvelous interaction with the K-12 schools in Denver!

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Community College-University Collaborative Assessment to Better Understand Student Attrition, Retention, and Learning Outcomes

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Assessment has received increasing attention in higher education over the past several years. Are we doing what we *say* we are doing? Are we doing what we *think* we are doing? Accrediting agencies are looking more carefully at student outcomes and student academic achievement. The approach has moved away from a quantitative, head-count of graduates, to more qualitative, multi-method, student success models.

Arizona State University (ASU), a research university with approximately 43,000 students, located in the Phoenix metropolitan area, and Phoenix College (PC), a two-year community college with approximately 12,000 students long have been concerned about the quality of experiences (academic and social) that their students face. In an effort to understand the barriers and bridges to successful college and university experiences, **PULSE** (Project to Understand Learning and Student Experiences) was implemented in the fall of 1993.

This inter-institutional panel study, based upon the interplay of the involvement and commitment dimensions, was designed to serve two purposes. First, to investigate the processes that students go through as they move through and between college and university systems. Second, to provide an existing cohort that facilitates collection of data on students' opinions, attitudes, and outcomes.

Sample

At ASU, the first phase of **PULSE** involved the collection of baseline data from two groups of students during the 1993-94 academic year. The first group (500 freshmen) was randomly selected from the fall 1993 entering new student population. Purposeful over-sampling of minorities was used to ensure longitudinal representation; therefore, all minority freshmen were included in the sample. The second group (500 transfer students) was selected from the entering transfer student population.

At PC, the first phase of PULSE was slightly different. PULSE began as a pilot project in spring 1994. The population for the pilot was defined as students enrolled in the general education core courses of English, Reading, Math, and Communication, as well as Social and Behavioral Science required courses of Sociology and Psychology. These courses were selected because students who transfer to four-year institutions typically enroll in these courses early in their program of study. A total of 1,055 students completed the initial survey.

Instruments

The initial survey instrument, *the Entering Freshman Survey*, was developed at ASU. This survey was the basis for the PC instrument, the *Phoenix College Student Profile*. These surveys included items designed to assess attitudes and experiences such as:

- pre-college expectations, plans, and activities
- future expectations
- involvement—including employment, support systems, and participation in extracurricular activities
- family and community responsibilities
- satisfaction with academic, social, recreational, and cultural experience

Collaboration

This unique collaborative effort provided both insight into the nature of college-university collaboration as well as a rich source of realistic information about students attending both institutions. Contributing to the success of this collaborative effort were the shared goals of the two institutions, the common concerns regarding student outcomes, and the personal commitment to the project's success on the part of the staff at both institutions.

The community college-university link is seen as a single component of an educational system in Arizona. Many PC students transfer to ASU, and success is dependent on experiences at both institutions. Obtaining accurate information about students and sharing this information with each other facilitates student success at both schools.

On a practical level, the collaboration allows for efficient sharing of resources. The survey design and scoring for PC was facilitated by the collaboration with ASU. Technology for the production and implementation of such an ambitious project is shared between the schools. Increased communication between the institutions has led to a better understanding of the students at each institution. Overall, the differing perspectives and experiences lead to a richer model and more accurate data.

As with any project, there are some difficulties with inter-institutional collaboration. Funding priorities may change within an institution and maintaining administrative support at both institutions for such a long-term project can be a problem. The continuity of personnel for the duration of the project and the logistics of maintaining the inter-institutions research team can pose other obstacles.

Assessment

As colleges and universities begin to address assessment issues, baseline data set the stage for accurate outcome measures. **PULSE** data have been used to provide baseline information about student needs in the areas of academic and student support programs and subsequently help in planning and implementing programmatic efforts. As the project progresses, individual panels are used to assess student academic, social, and support service issues. These periodic *snap shots* of students' lives provide a much richer understanding beyond GPA, courses taken, and enrollment patterns. The sharing of data between institutions provides the basis for more effective articulation between the schools. These enhance student success and provide a model within which the college and university can constantly assess the ongoing situation with students. Because many students enroll at ASU after they have attended PC, **PULSE** is proving to be a useful tool to monitor these students and their progress as they move from one institution to the other.

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System-Supported Teaching and Learning to Improve Student Performance, Satisfaction, and Retention

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Introduction

Keller Graduate School of Management is using total quality management (TQM), referred to here as total quality, in the classroom to increase student performance, satisfaction, and retention (the proportion of students graduating from the program). Our strategy is to combine two streams of theory and practice, which have a common origin in the work of John Dewey, but which unfortunately have become dissociated over time due to historic tensions between the fields of education and business. The two streams of theory and practice are:

- A proven educational theory and methodology, mastery learning, for improving teaching and learning in individual classrooms
- A proven business theory and methodology, total quality, that permits distribution of the benefits of mastery learning to multiple sections, courses, and locations

We are calling the new instructional process "System Supported Teaching and Learning (SSTL)," in order to emphasize the enormous potential to be realized by increased cooperation among students, faculty, and staff, and to emphasize the importance of support by educational managers. The new instructional process focuses on providing both faculty and students frequent feedback and correctives using quizzes and retests. It is supported by:

- Faculty-developed and shared item banks keyed to course objectives
- Software for generating parallel tests and answer keys
- Well-defined administrative procedures and support
- Additional compensation for the faculty

The process is outcomes-driven. It is applied to the 20 percent of courses in which 80 percent of attrition occurs (an application of the Pareto principle).

Mastery Learning

Mastery learning was developed by Benjamin Bloom at the University of Chicago in the 1960s and has been applied by his students and many others in the following years. In essence, mastery learning focuses on providing feedback and correctives to students in individual classrooms to bring the majority of the students up to a predetermined standard. In general, students, faculty, and researchers report that mastery learning, appropriately applied, results in increased learning, more positive feelings about the school and about one's self as a learner, and improved retention.

While highly successful in individual classrooms, the problems with mastery learning have come when attempts have been made to implement it across multiple sections, courses, and locations. To our knowledge, such efforts have thus far universally failed. The central reason for these failures is the overloading of teachers and local staff with the paperwork, logistics, and added time of providing students with increased feedback and correctives. System-Supported Teaching and Learning (SSTL) has been specifically designed to address these problems. Before describing the particulars of the system supports being provided we will briefly describe Keller's variant of mastery learning.

Keller's Variant of Mastery Learning

There are many acceptable variations of mastery learning, all centered around feedback and correctives. Keller has developed the following variant. The first night of class, students are told that they are not in competition with each other for grades: all can earn an A, and all are encouraged to work cooperatively. From cooperative work, both givers and receivers of help will derive great benefits that will help them in the workplace, where the ability to continuously teach and learn with others is increasingly critical.

The previously used midterm exam has been replaced by three or four quizzes, each lasting 45-60 minutes of a class that meets for 3½ hours once a week. The three or four quizzes together take no more in total time than the midterm exam.

Prior to a quiz, instructors demonstrate specific examples of a problem type and the variations that occur. They assign homework that allows the students to practice on problems of this type and its variations. The instructors review in class the homework undertaken by the students, and they supply feedback and correctives to the students. On the night of the quiz, the homework is reviewed prior to the quiz. (Other instructors prefer a week's lag between the homework review and the quiz). As each student finishes his or her quiz and turns it in, the instructor hands the student a copy of the quiz with the stepwise solutions. This simple device was introduced by one instructor, Arunas Dagys, and has been so positively received by the students that all faculty employing SSTL have adopted it. With the answer keys in hand, the students are actively and cooperatively analyzing their mistakes in the hall outside the classroom, which fosters collaborative learning.

Class resumes five minutes after the time limit of the quiz, and the instructor asks for and answers any questions about the quiz, although generally there are very few remaining questions.

Students now have the opportunity to retest on the quiz. Each student is entitled to one retest on each quiz. The highest grade earned is the grade recorded for the same quiz. This opportunity encourages students to continuously improve. Retests are done Friday evenings at the School from 6:00–7:00 p.m., when no other classes are scheduled. There is no charge for the retest.

For any given quiz, there are two administrations of the retest, using parallel forms of the quiz. The first retest is the Friday evening of the week the quiz was first administered. At this point the quizzes have not been graded, but, because of the provision of the answer key, students have a good idea of how they did. The second retest is scheduled the Friday evening of the following week, after the graded quizzes have been returned by the instructor. The Friday evening retests are proctored by the School and express mailed to the instructor's home or work, whichever is preferable to the instructor, and are graded by the instructor prior to the next class.

Students who miss the in-class quiz may take both of the Friday evening quizzes, but students who miss the in-class quiz and a make-up quiz have only one opportunity and no retest. The few students who are in this situation are offered the prior quizzes and solutions for additional study support.

In some SSTL classes instructors include a parallel practice quiz and answer key as a part of the homework. The taking of the practice quiz is voluntary, but most students report liking it as a simulation of the actual quiz they will take in class. It has resulted in a reduction in the number of retests.

The final exam is comprehensive, covering the content of the entire course. The students are told that the quizzes will not necessarily include all of the content that will be covered on the final exam, but everything included on the final will have been demonstrated in class with homework and homework review, and students will be told prior to the final exam everything that will be expected of them for the final exam. There is no retest option on the final exam. Some instructors do provide the students with a practice final exam and answer key in week 8, which the students can take at home between class 8 and class 9, and which is part of the review in week 9 for the final exam in week 10.

Instructors using SSTL have found that about one-third of the students retest on any given quiz, which includes students performing at all levels, including A-, on the first testing of a given quiz.

The Implementation of SSTL: Providing System Supports

As of the February 1996 term, the Keller implementation of SSTL includes the following elements.

- An SSTL implementation guide has been written and distributed to all 17 centers. It includes all procedures, forms, and a training process for staff and faculty. In particular, a faculty mentoring program has been established to link up instructors using SSTL for the first time with instructors who have used the SSTL approach successfully. Also included are task requirements of all involved staff, i.e., the faculty member, center director, secretary, clerk, proctor, item bank manager, curriculum coordinators, and assigned trainers.
- Five of the seven targeted item banks have been completed at the base-line level, including a minimum of 15 parallel problems and step-wise solutions for each problem type, for a total of 300-400 items organized by course objective and problem type.
- Quiz generating software has been written and tested that creates quizzes, answer keys, cover sheets, and labels, with random or individual item selection, within a word processing environment that makes it easy for instructors and/or secretaries to add, delete, and change items.
- All 17 centers have been provided with the computer capability to receive electronically the quiz generating software, the item banks, and their periodic updates.
- Faculty are paid an additional $250 for each section in which they use the SSTL approach. Compensation is in no way related to student grades or retention.

Decisions are made term by term about how many and which sections at which centers will use SSTL. A decision to proceed requires the approval of the instructor, the center director, the regional manager, and a director of operations. In the February 1996 term, approximately 35 sections (comprising approximately 700 students) at 17 centers in five courses will be using the SSTL approach.

Outcomes of SSTL

Overall, students' reactions have been very positive. Representative comments include: "takes a lot of stress out of exams...provides immediate feedback on learning...ability to learn from mistakes...helps focus on important concepts...concepts learned are retained better...it encourages learning rather than competition...helps as we juggle school, work, and home...as a student coming back from a 10-year break from undergrade school, it has helped me regain my confidence...I have had to be out of town and this approach has allowed me to catch up."

Overall, faculty reactions have also been very positive. Representative comments include: "it pushes the students to stay on pace...it gives them some flexibility, and lots of feedback at regular intervals...bottom line, student achievement is clearly better with this method...they work harder and they like it...eliminates quiz anxiety...I knew who cared and who didn't...lets the student try to continuously improve if he or she wishes to put out the additional effort...we've given them a pathway for success, a 'road map' if you will."

On the negative side, some faculty have said that a few students abuse the opportunity to retest by not reading and doing the homework and using the in-class quiz to learn what specific problem types have to be mastered, then focusing narrowly on those problem types and taking the retest. For faculty troubled by this ploy of a few students we have added two options. First, as indicated above, the faculty can encourage broader learning by the students by indicating early in the term that the final exam will be comprehensive and may have problem types that were not in the quizzes, but which were demonstrated in class with homework and review. Second, the faculty can use a practice quiz consisting of all the problem types covered in class, with homework and review, then selecting from the full domain of covered problem types a somewhat different selection of problem types for the in-class quiz and each of the retests.

Attrition data for SSTL and non-SSTL students are provided in Table 1. At the level of four courses completed, attrition was 46.8% for the non-SSTL students, compared to 24.3% for the SSTL students.

Table 1. Attrition Data for Non-SSTL and SSTL Students

	Non-SSTL Students			SSTL Students		
No. of courses completed	No. of non-SSTL students completing the designated no. of courses	No. of non-SSTL students not completing the designated no. of courses	Percent of non-SSTL students not completing the designated no. of courses	No. of SSTL students completing the designated no. of courses	No. of SSTL students not completing the designated no. of courses	Percent of SSTL students not completing the designated no. of courses
1	2494	199	7.4	182	7	3.7
2	1880	663	26.1	302	27	8.2
3	1514	948	38.5	343	77	18.3
4	1266	1114	46.8	380	122	24.3

This finding needs to be treated cautiously. Clearly, we need to continue the analyses over more time. Also, this is not a true experiment in that students self-selected which center to attend and which course to take. There may also be a halo effect with a new approach that won't hold up over time. The observed differences may be a function of particularly dedicated faculty using the SSTL approach. Or, the SSTL students may have a lower level of attrition for a reason not related to the treatment. And so on. There are two critical points. First, from our perspective the critical data are the consistent positive feedback from the students term after term and the conviction of the faculty that the students are learning more under the SSTL approach. Second, our data on improvements in student performance, satisfaction, and retention for SSTL are in line with the data from hundreds of mastery learning studies conducted over the past thirty years. What is new here is that we are using system supports, including teamwork among faculty, students, administrators, and other staff, to distribute the proven benefits of mastery learning to multiple sections, courses, and locations.

Quality and the Convergence of Interrelated Problems and Solutions

One of the most powerful dimensions of total quality is the recognition that improvements in quality tend to solve multiple problems. Improved quality reduces scrap and rework; which increases productivity and competitive position; which frees resources for price cutting, added features, research and development, or some combination thereof; which leads to happier customers, who spread the word, and happier workers, who have less absenteeism and turnover.

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In education the same dynamic is at work. System-supported teaching and learning increases student performance, satisfaction, and retention, which creates increased faculty satisfaction and student referrals to potential students, and facilitates outcomes assessment and new faculty training. System-supported teaching and learning also stimulates discussion among faculty around course and program objectives. The increased revenue to schools can be used for increased faculty compensation, reductions in tuition and/or class size, additional services for students and support for faculty, research and development, or some combination thereof.

Conclusion

Keller Graduate School of Management has formulated and is in the process of implementing a new instructional process that combines total quality and mastery learning to provide system supports for teaching and learning to improve student performance, satisfaction, and retention. The classroom has long been held to be the private preserve of individual faculty, free to play out their brilliance or mediocrity without interference or support from the outside. One of the unpleasant secrets of education at all levels has been the agreement, largely unspoken, between teachers and administrators that teachers will get no real support from the system and in return the system will not interfere with the individual teacher's control of his or her classroom. This is why, in our view, total quality has heretofore been applied to almost everything in the university except the classroom. Now the relationship between the classroom, the school, and the larger society is changing under the stimulus of larger social and economic forces.

Our greatest hope is that our work, and that of others working to apply total quality in the classroom, will contribute in some measure to the creation of conditions of true self-control for teachers. In such an environment, educational management will provide appropriate leadership in involving faculty in defining, operationalizing, and communicating course and program objectives, providing feedback on how they are doing relative to the objectives, and ensuring that teachers have the resources they need to accomplish the objectives. Then, and only then, will teachers be able to assume the role of honor and dignity in our society that they so much deserve, but have been so long denied.

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Exploration of the Barriers to Timely Degree Completion

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The public perception of higher education is, in part, tied directly to the time required to complete a bachelor's degree. How long is too long? Parents paying for the fifth and sixth year of a college education will have a different perception from parents who only pay for three or four years. Is the issue really time or is the issue really cost? Taxpayers, too, have a vested interest in student persistence and timely degree completion since public moneys undergird both the public and private institutions of higher learning. Questions of accountability, integrity, and responsibility that arise need to be fully addressed in order to make the educational enterprise as efficient and cost effective as possible.

Background

During the 1994-95 academic year, a study supported by a Higher Education Cooperation Act (HECA) was conducted to determine the feasibility of more timely degree completions. With input from community colleges in Western Illinois, college graduates from Western and Eastern Illinois University, and current students at Western, a monograph was compiled focusing on barriers, strategies, and recommendations for timely degree completion (Witthuhn, 1995, 37). This presentation is directly based on that timely degree study.

Experimentation with the Time-Shortened Degree

As the acquisition of academic credentials becomes increasingly expensive, institutions are strongly pressured to modify their educational delivery to promote timely degree completions. A time-shortened degree is not a new concept in the United States. Efforts to modify the traditional four-year time pattern has a long history. As early as 1640, Harvard initiated modifications to promote faster degree completion. The agenda of most institutions has most often been an outcome of forces external to the academy. War, economic conditions, increasing college costs, changing work patterns, increased participation of women in the work force, and other external factors have caused universities and colleges to implement methods to promote the movement of students through the higher education system as quickly and inexpensively as possible (Van Gelder, 1974, 2).

The first American colleges modeled themselves after the four-year programs of the English institutions of Oxford and Cambridge (Meinhert, 1974, 5). However, when Harvard College experienced financial difficulties in 1639, President Eaton was forced to close Harvard's doors for a full year. When the college reopened its doors in 1640 under new President Dunster, a three-year curriculum was offered to compensate for the lost year. However, this experiment was quickly halted due to pressures to maintain curriculum standards and norms. The four-year program was reinstated to demonstrate the quality of educational programming (Van Gelder, 1974, 2).

With improved secondary schooling and the growth of German universities that implemented distinct school divisions of specialized studies, the English institutions reduced their four-year program to three years. Several American institutions such as Brown, the Lawrence Scientific School at Harvard, and the Scheffield School at

Yale deviated from the four-year standard and established a three-year program to model themselves after the Oxford and Cambridge curriculum standards. However, many educators considered the new Bachelor of Science and Bachelor of Philosophy degrees from these institutions to be second class credentials, and these curriculum programs were soon returned to a four-year plan of study (Meinhert, 1974, 6-7).

The greater number of high schools in the 1860s once again encouraged institutions of higher education to reevaluate their degree requirements. Harvard President Eliot felt that the new maturity of freshmen, the improved training and duplication of coursework from the secondary schools, and the expansion of the professional and graduate education would enable colleges to reduce the time of degree completion. Eliot's belief was shared by educators at Johns Hopkins, Columbia, Clark, and numerous other institutions. Each attempted a three-year baccalaureate but failed to establish a permanent program because of faculty opposition and the introduction and competition from the emerging junior (community) colleges (Phipps, 1982, 300).

Robert Hutchins, President of the University of Chicago from 1929 to 1945, had a further impact on the curriculum structure of higher education by attempting to combine the last two years of secondary school with the first two years of college. Students were admitted to college prior to graduating from high school and were allowed to proceed through college as fast as they could pass their proficiency examinations. Courses, credit hours, and other requirements were replaced with the student's performance on these examinations (Hoffman, 1974, 9).

The greatest impact on the higher education community occurred immediately after World War II because of the tremendous increase in the number of students attending college. In order to provide access for these students, a number of institutions designed plans that integrated the summer semester into a year-round curriculum schedule or allowed students to carry heavier courseloads to reduce the total semesters of study (Meinhert, 1974, 14-15).

Once the Vietnam War ended, the changing workforce, the increasing maturity of students, the increasing duplication of coursework, and the increasing cost of education were cited as reasons for the pressure to again modify the educational delivery system. Past efforts to change the curriculum structure and the time of degree completion were revisited and new ideas were developed to shorten the time of degree completion. The most commonly used methods included early admission of high school students, competency evaluation, time reduction, testing and assessment, better high school to college articulation, and a revision of degree requirements. Testing and assessment were particularly popular methods because they allowed students to be awarded credit for acquired knowledge. Advanced Placement (AP) and the College Level Examination Program (CLEP) were developed in the 1950s and were used nationwide to help thousands of high school students receive advanced standing in college (Meinhert, 1974, 35-36).

Experiences with Students

While the evidence of history suggests that external influences do affect timely degree completion, the views of current students on this matter are instructive. In a questionnaire using both open and closed questions, circulated to a random sample of students at Western Illinois University, 66% of the respondents affirmed the belief that one could complete a degree in fewer than four years. Juniors and seniors tended to agree more strongly with this perception than did freshmen and sophomores. When asked if they would want to graduate in fewer than four years if it involved a more rigorous curriculum, approximately 50% of the sample group indicated that they would. Even when the issue of extracurricular activities was raised, a surprising 49% of the students said they would be willing to sacrifice these activities if they could finish their degree in less time. (Witthuhn, 1995, 18).

Given these perceptions of students, it was necessary to determine if students were aware of existing fast-track options. With regard to advanced placement, only 15% of the respondents indicated that they had received credit by taking such courses. Similarly, only a limited number of students indicated having taken advantage of CLEP testing as a method of earning college credit. While 42% of the students knew they could earn credit by taking CLEP exams, only 12% of them had ever taken such an exam. A significant number of students were under the impression that it was not worth the attempt at taking the exam since the exams were perceived to be quite challenging and often difficult to pass (Witthuhn, 1995, 19).

Finally, the respondents were asked to describe the greatest barrier they had experienced to timely degree completion. All in all, the students came up with 36 different barriers hindering their successful completion of a degree in four years or less. While there were a number of diverse and unique responses, some of the more common barriers included lack of courses offered by departments, change of curriculum, and the lack of knowledge about the options available. A significant number of students also mentioned limited financial assistance for summer school, poor advisement, and faculty opposition to fast-track curricular options (Witthuhn, 1995, 20).

Action Strategies for Promoting Timely Degree Completion

Given the focus of this study and presentation to identify barriers preventing students from finishing their degrees more quickly, it is appropriate to present strategies for overcoming the barriers. While some of these recommendations may be more pertinent to a given institution or individuals than are others, the following suggestions represent options that can be accomplished with minimum expenditure of resources and without diminishing program quality.

- **Institutional Agenda**
  - Use brochures, flyers, and other information pieces to promote CLEP, AP, independent study, and proficiency options at your university.
  - Encourage gifted high school seniors to enroll in introductory community college or university courses.
  - Design college catalogs, brochures, and scheduling materials to be consumer-friendly.
  - Address issues and needs that arise concerning financial aid such as scholarships, tuition waivers, and grants.
  - Counsel parents on the financial advantages of a timely degree completion.
  - Promote a consumer-centered focus in the advertisement, counseling, instruction, pre-admission recruitment, orientation, and retention activities.
- **Counselor Agenda**
  - Promote advanced placement options with interested students.
  - Participate in counselor training sessions and other activities for update of current information such as registration procedures, program changes, and new course offerings.
  - Assist students with satisfaction of deadlines of scheduling, testing, and matriculation issues.
- **Faculty Agenda**
  - Design curricular tracks that will allow students to finish their degrees in four years or less.
  - Advise and encourage disciplined and motivated students to finish their degree in a timely manner.
  - Make the student central to your course delivery.
  - Develop outcome based testing to ensure that life experiences and pre-learned competencies are rewarded.
- **Student Agenda**
  - Attend career placement sessions or testing that will narrow selection of career options.
  - Meet with advisers and academic personnel on a regular basis.

- Balance your academic schedule with social activities to prevent academic stress and burnout.
- Carry the maximum courseload allowed by your grade point average.
- Inquire about options such as CLEP and AP as early as possible.
- Avoid changing your curriculum after your sophomore year.

Conclusion

The authors are convinced that a degree need not take more than four years for a student enrolled full-time. The strategies described can assist institutions seeking to promote timely degree completion to do so. While it is true that students today may experience barriers hindering timely degree completion, these barriers can be removed if the appropriate actions are taken. Our study has strongly supported the conclusion that it is possible for any traditional student to finish college in a timely fashion. There are several steps a university or college can take to assist students who are committed to succeeding in college and graduating in a timely manner. This session will help to make these strategies clearer.

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Chapter IV

General Education/ Critical Thinking

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Truth in Nurture: Assessing the Institution's Critical Thinking Commitment

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During the 1994-95 academic year, a group of ten professors at Winona State University received grants from the Bush Foundation and from Winona State University to undertake a major assessment of critical thinking at WSU. Eventually, the two major grants were supplemented by several smaller grants from Winona-area businesses and grants-in-kind from a number of departments and offices at Winona State University. And ultimately, the assessment focused on a total of 290 critical thinking dimensions, far more than the number in any prior model considered in the design.

Assumptions of the Assessment—Why so many Aspects of Critical Thinking?

Behind the development of the Critical Thinking Inventory (CTI) questionnaire was the assumption that "critical thinking" is not easily defined as a relative few thinking techniques to be taught by any single department. This, of course, runs counter to many departments' self-concepts. "Critical thinking," for example, is often thought to deal with inductive and deductive reasoning, with enthymemes and syllogisms, all of which may be covered in depth in a course in logic or somewhat more summarily in a communications or composition course as the "thought" component of public speaking or of good writing. Yet, when we asked advice from the business community, the enthusiastic response was, "Oh yes, we do critical thinking all the time; it **is** our business!"—followed by a list of problem-solving skills, none of which could be considered a component of logic. Incidentally, when we finally tested the 290 thinking dimensions within the entire WSU faculty, we found the faculty in little more agreement with itself about what constitutes priority critical thinking than we found between humanities departments and the business community.

Circularity in the Present, Popularized Critical Thinking "Debate"

Our attempt to compile a rapidly expanding list of critical thinking dimensions thus became a commentary on the critical thinking "debate" currently raging in the United States. "Debate" is in quotes precisely because the popularized version is either non-existent or bogus. Instead of a debate, there is a general societal *concensus* that higher education cannot afford to be an education about facts or even about practical skills. Instead, because of a perceived rapid expansion of knowledge, education must focus on teaching thinking, especially higher levels of thinking that we compliment with the adjective "critical."

The complaint that American higher education is not doing the job of teaching students to think well may have begun in the business community or elsewhere, but paradoxically, the condemnation is easily accepted within academic circles. We as academics, after all, got into the business precisely because we liked to think, particularly to think higher and bigger thoughts. So when accused of not teaching thinking well, we are cut to the quick but inwardly pleased that someone cares that we teach the thinking we always wanted to deal with. So we return to our classrooms reinvigorated to do a better, more enthusiastic job of teaching critical thinking.

Of course, by "critical thinking" we mean exactly what we thought we had been teaching all along. We just need to be more enthusiastic about it. And so chemists among us do a more sincere and fervent job of teaching the thinking skills that make for good chemists, the philosophers wax eloquent teaching the skills of logic, the communications faculties renew their zeal for teaching the thinking skills necessary to consistently reach audiences, and the business professors get all the more explicit about the rationality of organizing a profitable modern business. And not infrequently, we all get together in the faculty lounge and deplore the fact that the university isn't preparing students to think better—by which we mean, of course, to think more critically with the kinds of skills we ourselves prioritize in our own teaching.

Integrity, Truth, and Nurture

Is there any alternative to the current "critical thinking debate" as this kind of a circular, tautological exercise in futility and feeling good about ourselves? We believe there is. The first step out of circularity is the recognition that "critical thinking" is a huge set of thinking skills that normally must be learned somewhat separately but must be successfully employed in combination. The CTI's 290 dimensions are an indication of that *immensity*, not a definition of its full range.

Second, we believe that academic faculties must learn to respect the *full range* of critical thinking concepts, not just their own discipline's range or even their college's range within the larger university. If the chemistry department treats with contempt the thinking skills typically taught in English and English treats with equal disdain the thinking skills taught in chemistry, then we are seriously belittling the nature of higher thought to ourselves and giving our students reason to choose self-serving sides rather than to become educated to navigate an uncertain future with fully operative minds.

Third, we believe that, having recognized and respected a huge corpus of critical thinking skills, academic communities are then capable of recognizing the "critical thinking truth or truths" of *that* community. The important truths are the truths of *nurture*. We are in the business of nurturing—developing, growing—thought, or we aren't in the business with integrity. But once we recognize how much thought we are responsible for, it is obvious that none of us can do it all. So any institution, any college within any university, any department, or any instructor ultimately can do no more than nurture *some* small number of aspects of critical thinking.

And to do that part of the nurturing business honestly in the face of an increasingly distrustful polity, we need some clear measuring tools to show what we are about—what we are in fact nurturing and how well we are going about it.

We need this measuring, first, to keep us out of circularity *and into strategies of teaching better*. We also need this nurturing measurement in order to respond to public scrutiny with integrity.

In this context, the inspiration for the CTI is largely the impetus of WSU President Darrell Krueger, who has argued from many national platforms that we in education, especially public higher education, must recognize that "what is measured is what is valued; what is valued is what is funded." If we cannot tell parents—whose lives have been devoted since the infancy of their children to raising funds for their children's higher education—what it is in thinking that we will be growing in their children and by what methods we intend to achieve that growth, we cannot be surprised if parents see colleges only as expensive ways to buy union cards to professional employment. If we in public education cannot tell legislators what kinds of thinking our students are learning to do more of and how we are getting them to do more, then legislatures will lean increasingly toward the public's jaundiced view of our endeavors.

Developing an Honest Institutional Profile of Thought

The CTI was eventually administered to better than 120 students representing a random cross-sample of the University. For each critical thinking dimension, students were asked to indicate how often on a 1 (Very Often) to 5 (Never) scale they had engaged in that particular type of thinking in the last 12 months.

Among other data, students also indicated three key nurture correlates:

- their grade point averages,
- their class level (from first-year to senior),
- their personal satisfaction with themselves academically as a composite of five affective questions.

It was then possible to establish for each of the 290 critical thinking dimensions the mathematical relationship between the dimension and each of the nurture correlates. We would argue that these three correlations are each measures of nurture:

- the nurture of thought indicated by higher grade point average for those who do more of the thinking dimension,
- the nurture of thought indicated by increased use as the student nears graduation,
- the nurture of thought indicated by increased personal academic satisfaction for those who do more of the thinking dimension.

It is important to note that we are not arguing that the absolute level of thinking for any dimension is a *nurture*. For any particular dimension, it may easily be that Harvard has a much higher absolute level of thinking than Winona State, though probably some other dimensions go in the opposite direction. In neither case does this show anything directly about nurture. Harvard self-selects certain kinds of students, and so does Winona State. And in the self-selection, there is every reason to believe that a student body inherently does some kinds of thinking more and some kinds of thinking less. That is neither to Harvard's credit as a teaching institution nor to WSU's as a teaching institution. As teaching institutions, we must have the integrity to ask, what skills are we teaching to be more employed and by what means are we so teaching. The *Three Nurtures*, mentioned above provide a telling profile of what an institution dedicated to teaching is really accomplishing.

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Collaboration Between General Education and the Major

David Chattin
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Perspective

Just as Copernicus revolutionized the geocentric system into a heliocentric one, we ask the reader to consider the possibility of a "Copernican Revolution" in higher education, the result of which would be to see general education, not the major, as the center of gravity of the undergraduate experience. The major, the minor, and electives, then, would orbit around general education as the most massive and the coherence-causing body in the academic system.

Several distinct lines of reasoning converge on this Copernican way of seeing things. We like, first of all, Aristotle's notion of an "architectonic" science (for him it was Politics), one that brings into coherence the contributions to the good life of the more particular sciences, just as the architect harmonizes the work of different artisans into a meaningful whole. There is also Cardinal Newman's image of a liberal education where students live among "practitioners of all the disciplines," each of which is partial and abstract in itself. In the university setting, these disciplines come together to "balance, complete, and correct" one another and (more positively) to "support, rely on, and aid" each other.

More recently, Joseph Kockelmans of Penn State has written about the "transdisciplinary" function of general education in knitting together the meaning that the separate disciplines have created out of the vast repertoire of human experience. And Paul Hirst, a British philosopher of education, in defining liberal education as essentially a "comprehensive" approach to the human task of making meaning, requires that a liberal education consist of mastering, on a generalist's and not a specialist's level, every one of the seven principal intentionalities (ways of knowing) that he identifies.

What all of these people have in mind coalesces around our metaphor of a Copernican Revolution. A substantive, coherent, and coherence-generating general education program has the mass and the force to keep all the other parts of the undergraduate curriculum from becoming "exorbitant" (Newman), that is, from going off on their own tangent and creating a self-centered and one-sided world of meaning cut off from dimensions of human experience that are missed by such a concentration on one intentionality.

A second request that we make of the reader is to adopt, in all that follows, the point of view that the student has on the undergraduate curriculum. For students, in this Copernican system, there are two principal elements, general education and the major, the first because this is how the college they've chosen to attend strives to attain its mission with all of its students, and the second because this is how students have chosen to prepare themselves for life after college. Now the question we want to investigate is: "What will result for student growth and development, if these two principal components of every student's one and only undergraduate experience work together deliberately and systematically, and not just accidentally and serendipitously, throughout all eight semesters? Can general education and twenty-some majors not just co-exist more or less peacefully on the same campus but truly co-labor at student development?"

The College's Core Curriculum

Saint Joseph's College in Rensselaer, Indiana, has a great advantage in undertaking such a project, because it has had a well-established 45-semester-hour Core program in operation since 1969. Each of the semester segments of this Core, all of which are required of all students, is designed and taught by a team of faculty from up to six or seven different disciplines, so that a good two-thirds of the full-time faculty are involved in Core in any given semester. A brief sketch of the parts of Core is as follows:

Core	Part	Credits
Core 1	Contemporary America	6 credits
Core 2	The Modern World	6 credits
Core 3	The Roots of Western Civilization	6 credits
Core 4	The Christian Impact on Western Civilization	6 credits
Cores 5-6	Humanity in the Universe	2 x 3 credits
Cores 7-8	Intercultural Studies	2 x 3 credits
Core 9	Toward a Christian Humanism	6 credits
Core 10	Christianity & the Contemporary World	3 credits

The first four parts of Core (freshman and sophomore years) have a chronological principle of organization, the next four Core segments are thematically organized (junior year), and the senior year (Cores 9 and 10) is explicitly integrative in its structure and purpose.

Over the years that the program has been in operation, the faculty has come to agree on a set of six goals for Core over its eight semesters. Each Core segment gives varying degrees of emphasis to the different goals depending on where a segment comes in the progression from freshman to senior year and on the focus of its content. All ten of the Cores work on cognitive and communication skills development and create academic community. All of them likewise emphasize the valuing dimension of the readings and issues that are discussed. Roughly half are more explicitly religious and Christian in such discussions. Finally, the interdisciplinary and integrative goals of the program receive increasingly intense emphasis as students enter their junior and senior years. This occurs because the students are more experienced in Core and also because they have by then learned how to make sense of the world via the intentionality of their major—which they started in the first semester of their freshman year! And this is precisely the realization that prompted the project we wish to present.

Our FIPSE Project

Fortunately, we were able to convince several program officers at FIPSE that this was the next "neat idea" for American higher education to investigate. After years of general education reform and more recent efforts at re-formulating the major (particularly by AAC&U) in *separate* projects, shouldn't the two parts be brought together? This notion is particularly appealing, if you take the student point of view on the undergraduate curriculum. So we got a grant of about $147,000 over three years to develop and implement this idea.

Our project worked with four to six departments each year, and in that way we covered about 90% of the students with a declared major and 45 out of 50 full-time faculty. The departments involved were the following:

- 1993-94–Communications, Education, History, Psychology
- 1994-95–English, Management, Marketing, Mathematics, Philosophy & Religion, Political Science
- 1995-96–Accounting-Finance, Biology, Chemistry, Music, Sociology & Human Services.

The overall goal of the project, to establish collaboration between the Core Curriculum and the majors offered by the College (over all eight semesters), was specified into five objectives to guide the work of each department:

- develop an eight-semester plan for the major, distinguishing courses into introductory, intermediate, and advanced;
- specify learning outcomes by level (#1), for certain key courses, or even for each course;
- work out ways of assessing attainment of those outcomes by means of specially designed course assignments, critical point performances, or external measures;
- determine what the department contributes TO the Core Curriculum (what should every graduate from the College know about this discipline?); and
- decide specifically what skills and content the department will make use of FROM the Core Curriculum as students progress through the major.

Accomplishments

The most important thing that was accomplished by this project—BY FAR!—was a shared vision of the complementarity between the Core program and the majors, coupled with a common commitment to an ethos of collaboration. This accomplishment is intangible, and certainly difficult to measure systematically, but we can point to numerous behavioral manifestations of this spirit.

Some departments have changed writing assignments in their freshman courses, so that they reinforce the skills development work in Cores 1 and 2 (summaries, position papers). The progressive bibliographical assignments in Cores 1 to 4 (periodicals, stacks, reference room, all three sources) have also been synchronized with research expectations in major courses. In the Core writing program, professors give students the leeway to select a paper format that is most appropriate to their major, provided they maintain consistency.

Content played a role in the collaborations too. Both English and History rely on the Core program to cover certain areas of the world (e.g., literature in foreign languages) and certain time periods (the ancient world), so that the list of departmental course offerings can be trimmed. Some programs count parts of Core for external accrediting purposes. And some departments owe a large portion of their reason for being in the College to the role that they play in Core (philosophy, religion, English, history). But the department that caught on the best to the whole spirit of the project was Communications, because they actually specified the level of Core that their majors had to complete as a prerequisite for each of their intermediate and advanced courses. By requiring Core segments as prerequisites, they knew they could presume certain content and a particular level of skill development on the part of everyone enrolled in the class.

Some departments were motivated by the project to discover things that they ought to be contributing to the growth and development of all students at the College: the math department is developing ways to enhance quantitative reasoning skills for all students through the Core; Music is reworking its contributions to Core lectures; and the Commerce Division has made the delightful discovery that its knowledge about and expertise on issues of the contemporary world are very much needed and welcomed by their colleagues in other disciplines.

Assessment

Because of the lengthy series of federal and foundation grants that the Core Curriculum has attracted to the College (more than $4 million since 1976), the institution has acquired considerable expertise in assessing its *general education* program. CAAP has proven useful, when funding is available to pay its price. The tried and true instrument with a national data bank that has been the most enlightening is Bob Pace's CSEQ (College Student Experiences Questionnaire). We have used this instrument every other year since 1980 and find it extremely informative, both at the item and at the measure levels. We have also constructed a "values inventory" for ourselves using the OPI and the CPI as guidelines. With our attunement to student progress over eight semesters in this project, however, we have also gone back to some earlier studies of "what happens to students as they progress through Core?" by means of structured individual interviews and focus groups (e.g., what do senior biology-chemistry majors see as the strengths and weaknesses of Core?). And from time to time, we do a fun, "snapshot" assessment: for example, ask seniors to write down what they see as the "top ten" events in the evolution of the world, then see how many of them are pre-twentieth century and outside America and Europe.

A tremendous amount of progress, however, was made during this project in assessing student academic achievement in the *major*. Our English department, for example, produced a wonderful (and assessable) descriptive statement of what the graduate from their program ought to know and be able to do. Philosophy discovered that, once they had assigned courses to one of the three levels, they could rather easily describe the performances they would want to see in student papers in each course. And the Political Science group produced the exemplary document for the whole project in terms of brevity, accuracy, coverage of all five objectives, and integrity of the major.

But the biggest problems with assessment concern building it right into the work of the courses themselves, so that faculty will see it as integral to the task of teaching (and learning). Our best product in this regard came from our psychology department. Their stroke of genius was to construct a four-by-four matrix that focuses on four critical skills (related to content, of course) and four key courses (one in each year of the major). The four skills were selected on the basis of what a psychology graduate ought to know and be able to do, and the four courses were chosen (out of fourteen in the major) as critical points in either the student's progress in developing a skill or the student's moving into a different area of psychology requiring different skills.

Conclusion

Somewhere, way back near the beginning of this essay, we asked "what can happen for student growth and development, if we get general education and the major to work together?" Before closing, we'd like to translate that vague question into one that is answerable on the basis of empirical data. Bob Pace's 1990 monograph on the CSEQ, *The Undergraduates*, analyzed all of the data accumulated from the CSEQ over the twenty-some years of its use according to four categories of institutions, among which were selective and general liberal arts institutions (SLA's and GLA's). And he painstakingly demonstrated how the SLA's showed up as "the best of all the types of institutions" in the CSEQ data.

Now Saint Joseph's College is clearly a GLA institution, however you want to define that category. But there are some measures on the CSEQ (for example, gain in writing skills, ability to work in a team situation, analytical thinking) on which our outcomes equal or exceed those of the SLA's. And there are several other measures where there is what we judge to be a "surmountable" gap between our scores and the SLA scores. Therefore, we have formulated as a testable hypothesis for this project that successful and full implementation of collaboration between general education and the major will achieve SLA-level results on the *CSEQ* at a GLA institution.

Another measure of the success of this project is behavioral and can be verified via observation and interviews. By the time our students are seniors and get involved in the job search, they will have been through six or seven semesters of this collaborative curriculum; at least this will be the case in 1998 and beyond. As a result, they should of their own accord (that is, automatically and spontaneously) use the Core Curriculum in their resumes and job interviews as their "differential advantage" in the job market. Graduating seniors ought to be *aware* of their general education Core as the center of the coherence that they experience in their worldview, a coherence that is far from static but functions dynamically as the condition of possibility for connecting knowledge across disciplinary borders.

Of course what we really want to "come out" of this project is far more than data on the CSEQ and an awareness of coherence on the part of seniors. We want students to be both incipient experts in one way of knowing (their majors) and also to be able to bring to bear on the issue at hand relevant perspectives and content from a plurality of other disciplines—and do it in a way that respects the methods and criteria of evidence of those other fields. To put it in the Copernican terms with which we started this essay, we expect graduates to have an intellectual stance that incorporates both specialization and the integration of multiple perspectives, because that has been their academic culture throughout the eight semesters of the undergraduate experience.

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Designing and Measuring General Education: A Model for Developing and Teaching a Core Across the Curriculum

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Introduction

The reports generated by the Association of American Colleges (*Integrity in the College Curriculum*, 1985), the National Endowment for the Humanities (*To Reclaim a Legacy*, Bennet, 1984), and the National Institute of Education (*Involvement in Learning*, 1984) are in combination generally credited for giving reason for and shaping the discussions that have lead many campuses to change their curricula. Fueled by these debates, the six regional higher education accrediting associations exerted increasing influence for core curriculum reform. Additionally, in recent years, most state departments of education have expanded the emphasis they place on the need for a strong and relevant body of required general education in undergraduate degree programs.

In response to this well documented movement, many colleges and universities have changed their general education requirements. They have done this by both expanding the core and making the specific components more defined and more relevant to the demands students will face after their college years.

Diane Halpern and others have written about the changing college classrooms of today and how the time has come to establish a "culture of evidence" for improving teaching and learning (1994). The systematic institutional assessment of student outcomes has over the last few decades moved from being a good idea to becoming an expected practice at all levels of education. This relatively new emphasis on the assessment of student learning outcomes has also added interest and necessity to better define and accomplish general education in undergraduate programs.

It is not surprising that the curriculum reform movement also has taken root in community colleges. They have in large numbers joined the other sectors of education to review and analyze their curricular structures and specific general education degree requirements. Community Colleges, however, have taken on the challenge with a special apprehension. For them, the task has been especially difficult given the diversity of their student populations and the wide variation in their curricula. They have had to find ways to strengthen the "core," without undermining the specialty components of many two-year occupational degree tracks, most of which include a total of only 18 to 20 courses.

At Washtenaw Community College (WCC) in Ann Arbor, Michigan, this problem has been addressed by using an innovative approach that directly serves to develop a strong core of "common learnings" in a cross-disciplinary manner. The WCC core not only provides students with the needed specialty study in their chosen field, but also enhances faculty cross-curricular knowledge and perspectives, and provides the College with a unique curriculum model that integrates aspects of general and occupational education. This article provides a description of that model and reports on how WCC is now teaching and planning to improve its core across the curriculum.

WCC Curriculum Challenge

Washtenaw Community College was founded in 1966 as a comprehensive community college with a special mission in career or occupational education. Like many community colleges born in the 1960's, it grew substantially in its first thirty years, increasing to 10,000 credit students spanning 74 programs as of Fall 1995. Employer specified, job related, occupational courses dominate the content of most of WCC's degree programs. Required general education, although the specific requirements varied greatly among various program areas, was historically only minimally present at the institutional level. In fact, up until Fall of 1993, the only institutionally required general education courses were English writing and political science.

Recognizing the need to strengthen its core curriculum requirements, and prompted by the North Central Association's (NCA) new accreditation requirements and criteria (NCA, 1994), the faculty at Washtenaw engaged in a two-year project to create a new model for meeting the general education needs for future associate degree students. The goal was to find a solution that met five criteria:

- the expectations of the regional accreditation body (NCA) and various program accreditation groups;
- the faculty's beliefs on the qualities that students will most need, regardless of their program area, in order to live and work effectively in the twenty-first century;
- the faculty's desire to retain program design flexibility within departments, and to avoid a required set of courses or distribution requirements;
- flexibility of course selection by students so that they could still pursue a "General Studies Degree" to meet their interests and educational objectives; and
- the desire of the administration and the governing board to see the general education component strengthened in a cost-effective manner that was student centered, and also responsive to the educational needs of the service community.

All five of these factors contributed to shaping a "core" solution. Each influenced the core in different ways. In the end, all the criteria were met in a way that worked for Washtenaw, but the challenge was substantial.

A Core Developed by All Faculty for All Students

Lead by the efforts of a 16 person (11 faculty and five administrators) core curriculum committee, the WCC faculty spent the 1989-90 and 1990-91 academic years reviewing and debating the merits of traditional general education models, as well as innovative proposals to address the task in a non-traditional fashion. The commonly used approaches that either establish distribution requirements or construct a series of courses required of all degree students were reviewed as part of the study process. These traditional approaches to core learnings were tested, yet broadly rejected by the faculty. In particular, many faculty expressed dissatisfaction with the conventional approach of reducing the number of program specialty courses to "make room" for the expanded core. Most felt a better approach could be created.

In the end, WCC did find a better approach. Although the traditional academic territories and departmental workload interests played a large role in the deliberations, the predominant thinking was that general education is most effective when taught in a cross-disciplinary fashion. It was expected to effectively work with a diverse curriculum and student body, and also secure widespread faculty acceptance, but most importantly, faculty commitment to teach the common learnings across the full curriculum. After much study and debate, the College chose to express the curriculum ideal of seeing the unity of knowledge and the value of core learnings being taught in many subject areas, preferably in an applied fashion. Similarly ideal was the desire to have all the faculty specify, develop, and deliver the core. For most of the general education learnings, they became embedded in career education or specialty liberal arts courses. Consequently, by teaching the core across the curriculum, WCC chose to make the core extremely relevant for all faculty and for every degree student, regardless of his/her program, area of interest, and/or concentration.

The decision to make the Washtenaw Core a series of learning elements that could be taught within many different subject areas promoted much informal faculty professional development. Through dialog, each faculty member had the opportunity to enhance his/her cross disciplinary knowledge, as well as expand their appreciation for the work of their colleagues. Many intense debates occurred during this time over the descriptions and levels of the core elements. The end result was a core curriculum model that provides all the faculty the opportunity to develop and teach the common learnings in a manner that provides valuable applications for students in every program area.

Description of the Core

Washtenaw's Core Curriculum is made up of twenty-four core elements that are clustered into eight categories: four skills categories and four content categories. (See Table A on the following page for the twenty-four elements.) The skills categories are communication, critical thinking, mathematics, and computer literacy. The knowledge categories are art and humanities, natural science, technology, and social sciences. These are typical categories for a post-secondary core that is meant to cover the skills and knowledge required for success in the workplace or to support further formal educational attainment. What is not typical is the way in which the core is delivered.

WCC's Core Curriculum focuses on the specific skills and content that associate degree graduates must demonstrate, rather than the traditional set of course distribution requirements. This approach allows core competencies to be included in many courses from across the curriculum. It does not limit particular core elements to a discipline area. For example, a core element for math skills may be included in a radiography course, a psychology course, a math course, or other courses, as long as the course developers demonstrate through acceptable documentation that the required core math skills will be taught and learned in the course.

Although many programs still have prerequisites and program requirements for support courses from other discipline areas, this model promotes the combining of core competencies with the specialty competencies. This is accomplished through cross-curricular offerings that teach core skills in an applied manner related to the student's major. The approach tends to blur the distinction between occupational education and general education, integrating the two into courses that have both occupational and general education functions. Since the Core was implemented, most of the College's associate degree programs have included some cross curricular courses of this type. The faculty in several program areas have done extensive work to meet core curriculum elements in this way. For example, the Culinary Arts Program meets math elements in eight of the culinary arts specialty courses and writing elements in two specialty courses. In addition, students are required to take one course each from the Math and English Writing departments. This gives students a general background in math and writing skills and plenty of practice in applying these skills to the culinary arts field.

Lessons Learned and Advice for Others

Few curricular endeavors on a college campus are as challenging and rewarding as is the creation of new general education requirements. In one form or another, this type of activity touches everyone in a significant way. The curricular essence of an institution is clearly revealed by what it declares to be the core requirements for graduation. For those colleges who successfully navigate a major change in general education, the lessons learned are powerful and should be shared with others. The WCC experience, perhaps unique in more ways than not, does reveal, nonetheless, some salient lessons. Sharing these could help other colleges, especially community or technical colleges with strong, dominant career education programs, to develop a core in a value added fashion. Five distinct points of advice can be drawn from the Washtenaw experience. These are suggested guidelines for others who desire to develop a strong core curriculum that is designed to be taught and learned in contextual fashion, and is firmly based on broad faculty involvement and support. They are offered here in priority order:

- Faculty and student involvement is central

Washtenaw's Required Core Elements for All Associate Degree Programs

I. SKILLS

A. Communication

1. To read and listen in a critical and perceptive way; to speak in an organized, clear, and effective manner.
2. To use information sources and information gathering techniques; to cite sources when producing written communications.
3. To develop, organize, and express thoughts in writing using standard English.

B. Mathematics

4. To apply basic mathematics through the level of elementary algebra.
5. To represent and solve problems using mathematical techniques.
6. To interpret elementary descriptive statistics.

C. Critical Thinking

7. To comprehend and use concepts and ideas.
8. To develop, express, test, and evaluate ideas.
9. To analyze problems, develop solutions, and evaluate results in a clear, logical, and consistent manner.
10. To distinguish between fact and opinion; to recognize biases and fallacies in reasoning.

D. Computer Literacy

11. To use computer systems to achieve professional, educational, and personal objectives.
12. To apply the protocols of computer use and respect the legal and other rights of individuals or organizations.

II. CONTENT

A. Arts and Humanities

13. To be aware of the artistic experience in personal and cultural enrichment, growth, and communication.
14. To be aware of the nature and variety of the human experience through the methods and applications of the humanities.

B. Natural Sciences

15. To understand the basic principles of scientific inquiry.
16. To have a knowledge of basic human biological principles, including those related to wellness.
17. To understand the basic principles of the natural sciences, and their relationship to the environment.

C. Technology

18. To understand the basic principles and applications of technology.
19. To understand the principle of integrating technological elements into systems.
20. To understand the relationship of technology to individuals, society, and the environment.

D. Social Sciences

21. To understand the methods and applications of the social sciences in exploring the dynamics of human behavior.
22. To understand those principles and values, including individual rights and civic responsibilities, which maintain and enhance democracy and freedom in a pluralistic society.
23. To have a working knowledge of the history, structure, and function of American social, political, and economic institutions.
24. To be aware of the contemporary global community, especially its geographical, cultural, economic, and historical dimensions.

- Build from a strong syllabi system
- Recognize the fluid nature of the core
- Remain flexible and help find solutions
- Take full advantage of the technology

Summary

This presentation offers a description and analysis of one college's experience in strengthening its core curriculum to meet faculty, student, and community needs. This case is especially relevant to colleges with large numbers of occupational programs that want to provide students with their needed career specialty study, along with a strong core of general education that does not require the redirection of large numbers of credits or courses. It also demonstrates how a college can design and teach a core across the entire curriculum in a way that enhances faculty communication and cross-curricular knowledge. The Washtenaw circumstances were somewhat unique, but there is much here that could be used by other institutions to meet their general education challenges. Most importantly, others are advised to keep the process primarily faculty based and student centered, build from a strong course syllabi system, design flexibility and growth capacity into the model, and use technology vehicles as devices to both design and communicate the specifics.

The Washtenaw Core Curriculum was created to be useful, appropriate, relevant, and flexible. It was developed by the faculty, but was intended to focus on specified student learning. It is unconventional in design, but very conventional in purpose. It fits one college's view of the curriculum demands of today, yet it also has a design capable of transforming the specific core elements to meet tomorrow's needs. Nonetheless, its two most important values are: (1) it is taught and learned across the curriculum, thereby supporting the "connectedness" that is the reality of knowledge and skills as well as the preferred condition between and among teachers and learners, and (2) it is designed to ensure that all degree students build skills and accumulate knowledge that will help them succeed with work and other life endeavors, including lifelong learning.

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General Education and the World of Work: One School's Success at General Education Reform

M. Cathy Maze
Carla Wiggins

Franklin University is an independent, not-for-profit metropolitan institution serving Columbus and Central Ohio. The university serves approximately 5,000 students per year through baccalaureate programs in business, technology, and nursing. The University also offers a Master of Business Administration. Franklin's nontraditional student population is generally interested in career-oriented education that integrates practice and theory. Without liberal arts major programs on which to draw, the University's general education offerings have historically been narrowly-defined and purely supportive in nature. In the mid-1980's, the University began what was to become a long-term and continuing process of general education reform, which has resulted in a much stronger and broader outcomes-based general education program. This program, which was approved in its final form by the faculty in 1992, was the result of a collaborative project involving faculty from diverse disciplines.

Defining General Education

In response to a request from the University president, the first General Education Committee (Task Force) was formed in 1985 to review and revise general education requirements for all Franklin University graduates. The committee was composed of faculty from the business and technology programs as well as those representing the liberal arts. The work of this Task Force resulted in a proposal that all baccalaureate degree programs be required to demonstrate adequate curricular attention to each of the following ten "general education" areas:

- Logical thinking and critical analysis
- Competency in listening, speaking, reading, and writing
- Comprehension of quantitative data
- Consciousness of history and cultural heritage
- Knowledge of science and scientific methods
- Understanding of ethics and values
- Appreciation of arts and humanities
- International and multicultural perspectives
- In-depth, sequential learning in a major discipline
- Personal development activities that strengthen the fitness and effectiveness of the individual

Faculty approved this proposal unanimously. Though not couched in assessment terms at the time, eight years later those same areas would be synthesized into seven general education outcomes and would form the basis of general education assessment at Franklin.

Curriculum Development

After its initial groundbreaking work, the membership of the General Education Task Force changed though the representative nature of the group remained intact. This second committee focused on curriculum development, and in 1990 the Franklin University Faculty Assembly "approved in principle" six statements that would guide the development of a new general education curriculum at the University. This approval of concepts not yet fully delineated was unprecedented and demonstrated the faculty's trust in the Task Force's vision of the future of general education at Franklin as well as that committee's understanding of the nontraditional student body and the traditional role of general education at the University. The six statements accepted in principle were:

- Establishment of a modified core system for the general education program which would include 60-64 credit hours approximately half of which would be required core courses and half distribution electives
- Retention of a four credit hour system
- Development of three sequenced interdisciplinary courses to be added to the general education core
- Integration of the new modified core curriculum into all degree curricula unless there were conflicts with external accrediting agencies (such special requirements were to be reviewed on a case-by-case basis)
- Development by every major program of a capstone experience allowing students to synthesize and apply course work and communication skills
- Establishment of a standing oversight and evaluation committee composed of faculty from general education and major programs

The modified core was to blend distribution and core approaches to general education. The distribution component featured general education electives to be selected from four traditional disciplinary groups (science, math, social and behavior science, and humanities). Distribution courses totaled 32 credit hours or slightly over half of the total general education requirements. The core component was intended to ensure that students shared a common educational experience that emphasized communication skills, an awareness and understanding of cultural differences and an historical perspective. This core was deemed particularly important for the typical Franklin University student who is often returning to school after several years with transfer credits from a variety of institutions and whose focus is (and often has always been) on business or technology. Core courses that constituted 28 hours in the general education curriculum included:

- College Writing
- Speech
- Three Interdisciplinary (Intercultural) Courses
- Report Writing
- Statistics

A modified core system was particularly beneficial because it offered students the value of a common experience but minimized the need for extreme curricular modification.

With the exception of three externally accredited programs (Nursing, Electronic Engineering Technology, and Mechanical Engineering Technology), all degree programs accepted the modified general education core *in toto*. The three accredited programs made a concerted effort to incorporate most of the new curriculum into their programs within existing accreditation guidelines. All major programs also developed new chronological degree plans that incorporated the new general education curriculum. This was particularly significant because historically Franklin students had tended to take major courses first and to delay taking basic general education courses until later in their academic careers—often until the last trimesters of their senior year! This was due in many cases to students entering the university as "special" rather than degree-seeking students. Typically these students were only interested in taking a few specific, career-focused courses. Often students eventually decided to get a degree but continued taking their major courses putting off "less important" subjects until the last. Even students who entered seeking a degree often followed this same pattern. General education simply was not emphasized at Franklin by the students nor by the "major" faculty. Therefore, the incorporation of the new general education curriculum into chronological degree plans with a strengthened intent to "hold the line" was much more important than it might first appear.

As a result of the faculty's acceptance of a long-term oversight committee, the existing General Education Committee was again reconstituted and took on the task of the development of three interdisciplinary courses that became Intercultural Studies (ICS) I, II, and III. These courses were designed to enhance communication and critical thinking skills while focusing on broad historical and cross-cultural perspectives. College writing and speech were required as prerequisites for Intercultural Studies I, and the three courses were meant to be taken sequentially. The first two courses in the Intercultural Studies sequence were designed to incorporate a social science perspective wherever possible but to primarily focus on historical information and the place and function of the arts in the societies covered. ICS III, which was set in the 20th Century, was intended to be more anthropological and to be comparative in nature. Two diverse world cultures were to be selected from a list of culture areas and compared to US culture within the framework of current social institutions and arts and literature. To make the material covered more relevant to Franklin students, technology and business were to be integrated wherever possible into course material, and the original intention of the general education committee was that the course would be taught by faculty from a broad range of disciplines at the University. These courses were first offered on a pilot basis in Fall Trimester 1991 and in the Winter and Summer Trimesters 1992. The entire modified core became effective in Fall 1992, and approximately 885 students have taken the ICS sequence since that time. Subsequent to the pilot programs, it became increasingly difficult to get faculty members from business and technology to teach ICS courses. Those who had volunteered during the trial process had been members of the General Education Committee. Therefore Intercultural Studies is now taught exclusively by liberal arts faculty. Currently a program review of the ICS sequence is underway under the direction of the general education committee and faculty governance. Once that review is completed, the committee will begin a broader review of the remaining core and distribution requirements and electives.

General Education Assessment

In preparation for the University Assessment Plan, the General Education Committee identified seven general education outcomes from the original ten areas approved by the faculty in 1985. Assessment at Franklin is generally portfolio-based and course- embedded. Therefore, student academic achievement is measured using specific course assignments. Criteria are currently being developed for use by outside evaluators to measure general education outcomes. Concurrently, specific assignments where such measurement can take place are being identified, modified or designed. A timetable for this process—data collection, training of a review panel, and evaluation—has been developed. Every effort has been made to utilize required general education courses in assessment. However, with a limited number of core courses and over 60% of our graduates transferring in with an average of 64 hours (many of those in general education areas), accommodations have had to be made. Appropriate elective courses with representative student populations and high enrollment figures (World Religions, Environmental Science, Sociology, Psychology, Film, and Theater) are also being used.

To further take into consideration the transfer issue and as a direct result of the General Education Committee's efforts and Franklin's assessment initiative, the University formally developed a program of writing and speaking across the curriculum as well as the assessment of some general education outcomes in all degree programs. Every major program at Franklin University has an assessment plan with program specific outcomes, measurable results, and assessment methods indicated. Those same degree program plans have also included a general education outcome related to communication skills. They are also required to have a least one other general education outcome integrated into their program and assessment plan (critical thinking, math competencies, historical and cross-cultural perspectives, scientific methods, and /or understanding of the arts and humanities). Many programs have three or more general education outcomes for which they have taken partial responsibility. The "ownership" of general education by business and technology faculty is perhaps one of our greatest accomplishments in general education reform at Franklin University.

Concerns

The path to general education reform has obviously been long, and it has not been without its opponents and problems. It continues to be somewhat controversial and by no means are all faculty completely satisfied with the "finished product," and that is good! Because a process has been designed and set in place to allow different constituencies to voice their concerns and criticisms (constructive and otherwise), general education at Franklin continues to mature, and in the long run we all win.

Conclusion

We have tried to decide what the critical steps and key characteristics of our reform process at Franklin University have really been. It is of course a difficult decision to make. However, there are some things that seem to stand out. The following list is not meant to be all-inclusive. However, hopefully it will provide some insights to others struggling with this same issue.

- Administrative support from the Board of Trustees on down
- Involvement of as many faculty as possible from all discipline areas in a variety of roles
- General Education across the curriculum with faculty ownership
- Outcomes Based Assessment and a systematic Program Review process
- A standing, representative General Education Oversight/Evaluation Committee

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Patterns of Evidence: Assessment of General Education

Michael J. Reich

The assessment of general education outcomes is a difficult and often a controversial process. Struhar (1994) has referred to assessing general education as "attacking the beast." Smith (1993) has referred to it as "grappling with Godzilla." The goals of many general education programs include producing graduates who possess:

- basic skills (reading, writing, speaking, critical thinking, etc.);
- an appreciation of the various approaches to knowledge;
- an appreciation of literature, the arts, cultural and ethnic diversity;
- a sense of social responsibility; and
- a desire for life–long learning.

These or similar goals are the foundation for most general education programs, whether they possess a highly prescribed or flexible curriculum. The goals are often ill–defined and difficult to assess. The concept of "patterns of evidence," which NCA has used as a theme in the development and evaluation of the accreditation criteria, is particularly helpful in the assessment of the "fuzzy" concepts associated with the evaluation of a general education program. This paper focuses on the procedures, measures, and outcomes associated with a comprehensive, two– year assessment of the general education program at the University of Wisconsin–River Falls, in which the"patterns of evidence" concept was applied. The procedures and measures are appropriate for use on many campuses.

We discovered that the nature of the general education objectives required the acceptance of the following basic premises prior to our selection of specific measures:

- There is no common general education experience, since students are allowed to select within several sub–area requirements.
- Students are learning information related to the General Education objectives through courses and experiences outside of the General Education program (i.e., advanced writing and math courses, major/minor courses, outside reading, etc.). Since one "pure" measure of General Education outcomes is an impossibility, multiple measures must be employed.
- There will be differential amounts of data available, dependent on measures available for each objective.
- General Education objectives have not been written in unequivocal assessable terms.
- The General Education assessment plan must be cost effective, employing readily available data whenever possible.
- Attempts should be made to develop a pattern of evidence for each objective.

Based on the above assumptions, multiple measures were employed for each general education objective.

Assessment Instruments

- **ACT Comp Objective Test.** The purpose of the ACT Comp is to assess the knowledge and skills that undergraduates are expected to acquire from general education and that are important to effective functioning in adult society. This test is widely used with advanced students. Normative data are available and an estimate of growth can be obtained based on the students' incoming ACT scores.
- **Pre–Professional Skills Test (PPST).** This test is taken by all students seeking admission to teacher education programs. Sub–test scores are provided for skill areas related to general education reading, writing, and mathematics objectives. National norms are provided for comparison.
- **College Student Experiences Questionnaire (CSEQ).** This instrument assesses a broad set of students' experiences, ranging from contact with faculty members and course learning, to the use of facilities and residence hall life. The portion of the CSEQ most relevant to general education objectives is the "Estimate of Gains" section. Students are asked to estimate perceived gains on a variety of areas (reading, writing, artistic appreciation, science and technology, etc.) related to general education objectives.
- **Student Survey.** Upper division students were surveyed to determine their understanding and awareness of the general education objectives, their attitudes toward and effort expanded in general education courses, and their satisfaction with the general education program.
- **Departmental Content Survey.** Departments that sponsor general education courses were asked to indicate the extent to which each general education objective was incorporated into the required course work.
- **Employer Survey.** The university periodically surveys employers regarding the performance and readiness of graduates to assume occupational responsibilities. The data obtained with regard to writing ability, communication skills, and technological preparation relate to general education objectives.
- **Community Survey.** Local community members, business leaders, political leaders, educators and members of advisory councils familiar with the university, its students, and programs, rated the importance of each general education objective. They also indicated their opinion regarding how well University of Wisconsin–River Falls students and college students in general were achieving on each objective.

Conclusion

Figure 1 displays a matrix of the general education objectives and the measures employed. Note, only a subset of measures is available for each objective, demonstrating the necessity for multiple measures. There is also a differential amount of data available for each objective, since some objectives are more difficult to assess than others. In addition, some conflicting results may be obtained; e.g., one measure may indicate success, whereas another measure may indicate a need for improvement. For each objective, it is important to analyze the entire pattern of evidence collected in order to judge if the objective is being achieved.

The results of our general education review have been supplied to the appropriate academic policy committee, which is carefully studying the results and which will make appropriate recommendations for change in the General Education program.

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Appendix

General Education Assessment Matrix

Skills							
1. a) To read effectively	✗	✗		✗	✗		✗
b) To write effectively	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
c) To speak effectively				✗	✗	✗	✗
d) To listen effectively	✗			✗	✗		✗
2. a) To understand mathematical reasoning	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗		✗
b) To interpret numerical data	✗	✗		✗	✗		✗
c) To perform math operations		✗		✗	✗	✗	✗
3. a) To think critically, to analyze problems systematically	✗		✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
b) To integrate knowledge from the humanities and the social and physical sciences	✗			✗	✗		✗
Breadth of Knowledge							
1. To understand historical perspectives	✗		✗	✗	✗		✗
2. To understand important literature of past and contemporary cultures				✗	✗		✗
3. To understand the ways in which artistic forms and styles represent and interpret the human experience	✗		✗	✗	✗		✗
4. To understand the principles and the methods of the basic physical and life sciences, including laboratory work	✗		✗	✗	✗		✗
5. To understand the concepts and methods of inquity in the social sciences	✗			✗	✗		✗
Critical Judgment							
1. To understand the impact of technology upon contemporary culture	✗		✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
2. To gain a global perspective of human culture, recognizing that this century requires such a perspective	✗		✗	✗	✗		✗
3. To develop a sense of ethical and social responsbility	✗		✗	✗	✗		✗
4. To gain knowledge of one's physical and psychological well being			✗	✗	✗		✗

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Implementing Competency-Based General Education

Cheryl Frank
Ken Peeders
Nancy Register Wangen

The story of general education reform in Minnesota's Community Colleges is unique in its statewide origins and in its collaborative design. It began with the efforts of faculty in four higher education systems—the Community Colleges, the state Universities, the Technical Colleges, and the University of Minnesota—in the summer of 1991. The fall of 1995 marks the implementation of a locally-designed, competency-based curriculum on each of 21 community college campuses. This article will explore briefly 1) the process of statewide curriculum design, 2) the implementation challenges facing academic deans on both small and large campuses, and 3) the attitudes and concerns of faculty as they worked to resolve local curriculum issues.

The Process of Statewide Curriculum Design

First, what made this large effort at reform involving four systems, over 60 campuses, and both two and four year institutions achieve as much as it has? A list of key elements in its success would have to include: leadership, a clear goal, productive activities to bring people together, and timing.

- **Leaders** of four systems shared concerns about the quality and coherence of general education. They saw students taking courses at multiple campuses often just to meet distribution requirements. If the quality of the experience were to improve, they needed to do something that crossed campus and system boundaries. They made a multi-year commitment and assigned responsibility for reaching the goals they set.
- **The goal**, clear to all, was a competency-based general education curriculum that would be designed by faculty working collaboratively.
- **Productive activities**—including necessary workshops, task forces, design and redesign teams—were funded jointly and organized at time intervals to keep the process and the momentum going.
- **Timing** provided some "lucky breaks." The state Legislature was pressuring for various kinds of reform, especially if reforms improved students' transfer of credit. The University of Minnesota had begun work on a new liberal education program and some of the community colleges were working on their general education program and even writing student competencies. By late 1993, a statewide competency-based general education curriculum was ready for college and university faculty to design and implement their unique versions of the Minnesota Transfer Curriculum.

The curriculum had come together through the collaborative efforts of many faculty members representing all disciplines. The Transfer Curriculum has *ten areas of study*, each with its own set of broad competencies to be achieved. There are:

- **two skill areas**—communication and critical thinking;
- **four broad areas of knowledge**— natural sciences, mathematics, history and the social and behavioral sciences, and the humanities and fine arts; and

- **four contemporary theme areas**—human diversity, global perspective, ethical and civic responsibility, and people and the environment.

Within the framework of the ten areas, students at each college or university study a curriculum locally-designed by faculty to achieve the competencies specified. Faculty at the sending institution certify that the students have achieved the competencies and their certification is accepted by the receiving institution. The many activities where faculty of all systems worked together as well as ongoing articulation committees provided forums where faculty could continue discussions of curriculum and issues in their respective fields.

Because it will transfer as a package meeting lower division general education requirements at any public college or university, the Transfer Curriculum offers students a coherent, thoughtfully-designed general education curriculum and seamless progress toward a baccalaureate degree no matter where they begin their education or where they finish.

Community colleges were well-positioned for all of the tasks involved in design of a statewide Transfer Curriculum because their system is one in which many reforms and relationships have crossed college boundaries. Through a system-wide Center for Teaching and Learning, faculty and administrators have led and supported other cross-system initiatives such as "writing across the curriculum," "computing across the curriculum," and special projects on critical thinking and classroom research. There exists a climate of collaboration within the community college system that addresses issues of teaching and learning and expects faculty leaders to engage in broad, even statewide efforts that address concerns common to all.

Challenges Facing Academic Deans

The primary challenge that faced academic deans at community colleges can be summarized in one word—communication. Communication with faculty was critical as the Transfer Curriculum evolved at a state level. Each college needed to design strategies for sharing with the college community-at-large ongoing information about statewide curriculum activity and, especially, information about a curriculum based on goals and competencies for general education.

Each college community needed to be kept up-to-date on local curriculum design activities to ensure that everyone had opportunities for input. The larger the campus, the greater the challenge this presented. Campuses also needed to adapt their processes for curriculum review and approval as courses were proposed for the new general education curriculum. Finally, academic deans needed to collaborate with other institutions about guidelines for inclusion of new courses and maybe even new disciplines in the liberal arts curriculum.

One of the colleges facing all of these challenges was Fergus Falls Community College, a small rural institution located in west central Minnesota. It has a student body of 1300. In its three decades of existence, Fergus Falls had made changes in its general education curriculum on a piecemeal basis, adjusting programs, changing individual offerings, but never undertaking the challenge of a total review of what it was teaching its students under the heading "general education." The great majority of its faculty of 40 full-time and 35 adjunct instructors has been with the college for many years. Academic administration is accomplished by one dean.

In the spring quarter of 1993, the institution undertook the work of designing a new general education curriculum based on the Minnesota Transfer Curriculum framework. It implemented the curriculum in the fall quarter of 1995. In the course of its work the college learned a great deal about itself. The faculty grew as change agents. The administration had confirmed for it several practical lessons in leadership.

Some critical early decisions created a climate in which change could occur. First, the college set up a "change team." Twenty-five of the college's full time faculty had been involved at some time in statewide efforts to design the Transfer Curriculum. During this development stage, these people had been communicators to the rest of the faculty and later played key roles in the adoption of curriculum changes on campus, serving on committees and serving as advocates for the changes.

Second, the college held a series of joint faculty meetings that dealt openly with tensions surrounding the early development process and helped to "quiet" contention. Individuals from the system office and faculty from other campuses who had been involved in the early conceptual development attended these meetings and fielded questions. At the same time, faculty sought to develop a philosophy of general education and to test it against the new curriculum model. They took the time to ask the question, "What do we want students to know when they have completed the general education program at Fergus Falls Community College?"

The key to ultimate success was the ad hoc committee of faculty leaders and members of the administration. Their charge was to implement the curriculum with open communication and broad access to decision making. In a series of early decisions, they adopted guidelines and procedures, determined a realistic target date for adoption, and developed specifics regarding course proposals and inclusion in the general education component of the AA degree.

As the process unfolded, a series of specific challenges developed, often appearing in the form of questions. In how many goal areas could a single course appear? Could a course in chemistry, which includes a significant writing component, satisfy a written communication goal? How should the curriculum handle the theme areas? Should they be assigned to a specific discipline, be interdisciplinary, or be open to all? Over a two-year period, these and other questions were dealt with in open discussion; and in the fall of this year, students began studying the college's answer to the question, "What do we want students to know when they have completed general education at Fergus Falls?"

There were lessons learned that would change the approach in any future effort. The committee would more aggressively promote the development of new courses in theme areas. The new curriculum is very limited in courses for people and the environment and in ethics and civic responsibility. The college would also ask members of the ad hoc committee to commit to serve through the duration of the project. A change in personnel between years one and two caused a slow down. The committee would be more realistic about closure on some issues. For instance, lingering debate over the breadth requirement continues as does debate over one or two courses in theme areas. There is continued discussion of the math requirement. Finally, staff recognize that someone must now deal with developing assurances that courses are being taught as they were presented and approved.

For administration, the revision process confirmed the importance of inclusiveness, good communication, and decisive decision-making. Success resulted from broad-based involvement from the earliest stages and inclusion of faculty from all disciplines, not only those traditionally associated with general education. A congenial climate was maintained through openness of communication, making decisions in the public arena, and honoring long-standing decision making policies. Decisions on key matters, delivered promptly and with support, allowed the college to surmount significant obstacles.

Fergus Falls Community College understands that it is not finished dealing with change issues. However, the statement made about general education will guide decisions for the immediate future. The process was invigorating. It instilled new interest in general education. It enhanced understanding of the college mission, the course offerings, and in many cases, the instruction provided. At the same time, faculty and administration understand that it is the beginning of a long journey.

Attitudes and Concerns of Faculty

Implementing a statewide curriculum is a complex endeavor that brings together faculty and administrators with differing campus needs and unique cultures. While faculty work is of central importance, trust and respect among both faculty and administrators are critical to the success of systemic change. Faculty needed and will continue to need time, patience, and support to learn new ways of teaching and to enhance student learning through a competency-based approach. Administrators need to find ways to make these available.

The experience of community college English faculty members as their colleges implemented the Transfer Curriculum was investigated in a recent case study This qualitative study involved faculty from inner-city, suburban, and non-metropolitan campuses. The interview responses of selected faculty members were analyzed as a means to obtain an in-depth understanding of colleges' experiences as they implemented the Minnesota Transfer Curriculum. Major topics or themes were:

- perceptions of a competency-based lower-division liberal arts curriculum
- the effect on existing curriculum
- the effect on campus climate
- strengths and limitations of implementation strategies
- perceived effect on student transfer

The term "competency-based education" is used in a number of ways in the literature. The lack of a common definition among faculty led to some confusion as course proposals were developed for inclusion in the curriculum. Generally, faculty in the case study described competency-based education as a way of identifying specifically and in measurable terms what it is that students need to learn and how the learning will be accomplished. Faculty emphasized the importance of early staff development in how to use competency-based approaches in the liberal arts.

Faculty reported various changes in local campus curricula. Generally, few new courses were developed in the first round of proposals. Most of their creative energy was expended in making changes in existing courses, especially in integrating competencies from the theme areas. There is interest in exploring possibilities for interdisciplinary courses as the curricula continue to evolve.

On each campus the college curriculum committee or a task force of the curriculum committee was the body used to review course proposals for inclusion in the Transfer Curriculum. As local campus implementation progressed, faculty reaffirmed the need for early staff development. They recommended providing sample course outlines that would demonstrate how competencies might be expressed. This would avoid the frustration of resubmitting proposals and promote the creation of high quality course outcomes.

The effect of the Transfer Curriculum on local campus climate was also studied. Some faculty members resisted the curriculum changes saying that the Transfer Curriculum was being forced on them. The story of the design process and the many participation opportunities needed to be told again and again. Clear communication that reached the entire campus community promoted positive responses and the good working climate so necessary for successful curriculum innovation. Most campuses had a core of faculty leaders who were intensely involved in working on the campus curriculum. This core of faculty leaders helped address issues such as perceived infringements on academic freedom, agreement within academic departments as to which goals and competencies their courses would meet, and the final design of a 60 credit liberal arts core. As colleges completed their work, most faculty in the study believed that their colleagues had positive feelings about the benefits of the Transfer Curriculum.

Faculty like the idea that all students who complete the 60 credit liberal arts core will be able to transfer the complete curriculum to any public state university and to the campuses of the University of Minnesota. Some will represent the community colleges on a statewide oversight committee that monitors the performance of transfer students as well as the content and functioning of various Minnesota Transfer Curricula. Faculty from all of the institutions studied recognized that they would need to design strategies to maintain changes made and to continue the evolution of their college's Minnesota Transfer Curriculum.

Summary

The Minnesota Transfer Curriculum is perhaps an even more effective approach to general education than its designers might have realized. Within the ten areas of competency, the framework allows for differing visions of education content and structure, both encouraging and supporting a wide range of responses. It accommodates evolutionary changes, allowing a cautious beginning where faculty can comfortably experiment with new structures and new teaching methods. Yet the theme areas, with their problem focus, demand interdisciplinary problem-solving, pulling faculty toward innovation. With the competencies, faculty have answered the question, "What is the point of general education?" The final challenge will be the kind of assessment that demonstrates clearly that students do indeed "get the point."

The true test of this reform lies in continuing its evolution, ensuring that changes made do not become simply a new "status quo." Faculty and academic administrators will need to devise new strategies to improve student learning and find the dollars to encourage and reward continuing improvements in a competency-based approach to general education.

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Assessment of General Education: A Performance Based Model

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Institutional Profile

Johnson County Community College (JCCC) is a comprehensive, single campus, suburban community college located in Overland Park, Kansas, in the Kansas City, Missouri, metropolitan area. The college was founded in 1969 and occupied its present 240 acre campus in 1972. JCCC enrolls approximately 15,500 credit students and serves an additional 16,000 individuals in noncredit, continuing education programs, courses, workshops, and other events per semester. The college offers a full range of general education/transfer preparation, career/occupational, and developmental courses as well as a wide array of student and support services to meet the diverse needs of its students.

The impetus for assessment of student learning outcomes at Johnson County Community College has come from several sources. One, of course, is the North Central Association requirement that institutions of higher education prepare and implement a student academic achievement assessment plan. In addition, for some time, JCCC has had a strong interest in and has conducted several pilot projects assessing student cognitive/learning outcomes. For example, the college participated in an early ACT research project involving the Collegiate Assessment of Academic Proficiency (CAAP) test. Although the CAAP results indicated that JCCC students performed at or above national averages in several areas, the college was not satisfied with the methodological logistics of CAAP. The decision was made, therefore, to investigate more feasible, less intrusive assessment strategies, that would also be more relevant to the general education outcomes identified by JCCC faculty. The results of that process culminated in the assessment strategies detailed below. Also, JCCC has a long history of comprehensive institutional research and evaluation and of using data to support planning and programmatic improvement. For example, for several years Johnson County Community College has had in place a comprehensive model to assess institutional effectiveness, several components of which either directly or indirectly evaluate student learning outcomes. They are: career student follow-up surveys conducted one and four years after career program students complete a program (i.e., earn a degree or certificate) or leave with "marketable skills"; an annual employer survey; a transfer follow-up process that includes an annual survey and receipt and analysis of academic data from senior institutions regarding the academic progress of former JCCC students who have transferred; an educational objectives survey of students who leave the institution without graduating, completing a program, or transferring; a course evaluation process (IDEA) in which students' perceptions of their progress on major course learning objectives, as identified by faculty, are collected and analyzed; and a comprehensive analysis, on a semester basis, of grading distributions and patterns, course and program attrition rates, and reasons students drop courses.

Description of the Model

Johnson County Community College's assessment of general education involves collecting and reviewing existing student work produced in courses throughout the curriculum for each of four major outcomes identified in the college catalog: mathematics, communication, culture and ethics, and modes of inquiry and problem solving. This review is conducted by interdisciplinary faculty and teams using holistic scoring criteria (rubrics) for each of the stated student academic general education outcomes. The results are reported in the aggregate and may also be analyzed and reported based on several other demographic variables (e.g., credit hours earned, prior courses completed, etc.). Each department addresses assessment results in its annual master planning document. The Dean of Instruction, with support from the college's faculty curriculum committee (the Educational Affairs Committee), is ultimately responsible for ensuring that appropriate curricular changes are made throughout the institution based on assessment results.

Philosophy

The development of JCCC's general education assessment model was initiated in early fall 1992 when the Dean of Instruction asked the faculty curriculum committee (Educational Affairs) to take responsibility for this task. Although the immediate impetus for this request was North Central Criterion Three, from the very beginning of the process the faculty and the dean agreed that outcomes assessment at JCCC would go beyond fulfilling an external mandate. The philosophy of the committee was (and is) that assessment of student outcomes should yield meaningful data from which decisions about curricular improvement can be made. In addition, the committee felt strongly that the purpose of assessment should be evaluation and improvement of the general education curriculum rather than evaluation of individual faculty. With this basic philosophy in place, the task of developing the assessment model was assigned to the General Education/Assessment Subcommittee of the Educational Affairs Committee.

This subcommittee added to this basic philosophy the belief that as many faculty as possible should be included in the assessment development process, either directly or indirectly. Thus, the subcommittee was expanded to include a wider representation of faculty. While a few members have changed throughout the process, the core of the subcommittee has remained intact.

Development of the Model

The development of the model to assess general education was a slow but steady and thorough process. This process proceeded as follows:

- **1992-93 Academic Year.** The subcommittee spent essentially the entire year studying and discussing assessment. Members read numerous books, journal articles, and NCA publications as well as talked with colleagues from other institutions and attended conferences and workshops. In addition, members reviewed current assessment procedures already in place at JCCC. By the end of the year, a conceptual framework of general education assessment was formulated and distributed to faculty for feedback.
- **1993-94 Academic Year.** The subcommittee determined that the reference to general education in the college catalog should be the basis for general education outcomes statements since the catalog is the college's formal medium for communication with students (i.e., academic requirements, standards, policies, and procedures). The members divided into four sub-subcommittees, each charged with operationally defining a specific component of the statement. By the end of the first semester, the groups had drafted outcomes statements that were presented to the faculty at large for feedback. This feedback was incorporated into the statements and by April 1994 the subcommittee turned its attention to assessment of these outcomes. Members continued their study of assessment methodologies and concluded that the idea of "performance-based" assessment was in keeping with their stated goal of assessment yielding meaningful data upon which to base curricular improvement. Thus, they began to explore ways to compile collections of existing student work in each of the four areas of general education outcomes. By the end of the semester, the rudiments of this idea were formulated, presented to, and approved by the Educational Affairs Committee. (See Assessment Plan Logistics.)
- **1994-95 Academic Year.** The subcommittee members spent this time developing holistic scoring criteria (rubrics) and standards for the outcomes. These rubrics and the scoring process were pilot tested on student assignments. The outcomes statements and rubrics were then clarified and revised. The subcommittee as a whole discussed the logistics of implementing the plan (see Assessment Plan Logistics) and proposed a larger pilot project for the 1995-96 academic year. A memo was sent to all teaching faculty asking for volunteers to participate in the pilot. Some forty faculty members responded. An orientation session was held at the end of the spring semester to explain the process and answer any questions.
- **1995-96 Academic Year.** Artifacts are collected from faculty across the curriculum and scored by faculty teams.

Assessment Plan Logistics

Who Scores...	Three- to four-person interdisciplinary faculty teams will score student artifacts using the rubrics developed. These teams are comprised of General Education/ Assessment Subcommittee members.
How Scored...	Team members score artifacts individually, with subsequent group meetings (if necessary); however, a team may elect to score as a group.
How Many Artifacts...	One hundred artifacts per outcome (that is, 100 for Math; 100 for each of the Communications areas: Reading, Writing, Speaking, Listening; 100 for Modes of Inquiry and Problem Solving; and 100 for Culture and Ethics) per year are collected. These are divided into 50 per semester, collected whenever available, usually late in the semester.
When Scored...	Fall semester artifacts are scored throughout the spring semester; spring semester artifacts are scored during the subsequent fall semester, and so on.
Who Selects Courses...	The Office of Institutional Research randomly selects courses from lists associated with each of the outcomes. Five classes per outcome are targeted each semester.
Who Selects Artifacts...	Faculty in each targeted class selects one artifact; Office of Institutional Research collects that artifact from the entire section, randomly sampling and copying 10 from each class for scoring by the faculty team.
Who Collects, Copies, Distributes Artifacts...	The secretary to the Vice President for Academic Affairs is designated to assist with the support tasks necessary for implementation of the assessment plan.
How Results Are Used...	Upon receiving scored artifacts back from faculty teams, the Office of Institutional Research compiles results and prepares a report to be distributed to faculty. The subcommittee reviews the report and raises issues for faculty to discuss. Action taken by faculty as a result of these discussions is reflected in the annual departmental master plans. The Dean of Instruction is responsible for ensuring that results of assessment are addressed in departmental and divisional master planning and budgeting processes.
Budget...	Compensation for faculty and staff who score student artifacts requires approximately fifteen thousand dollars annually. This amount has been set aside in the college's budget.
Assessment of the Assessment Plan...	Toward the end of the spring semester in each academic year, the subcommittee reviews the entire assessment process during a regularly scheduled meeting. The Office of Institutional Research assists in this review, which may involve a survey of faculty regarding the efficacy of the assessment process. Any recommendations are documented in the subcommittee's year-end report.

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Chapter V

Assessing Student Learning: Implementing the Assessment Plan

Assessment at Ball State University: Combining University-Wide Assessment with Discipline-Specific Assessment

Catherine A. Palomba

More than a decade ago, a number of individual and collective voices came together in the call for assessment at our colleges and universities. Among these, Alexander Astin popularized the notion of "value added" assessment. Many universities experimented with standardized testing and other approaches to large-scale assessment. Rather quickly, educators realized that assessment needed to be carried out at the discipline level as well. Assessment practitioners introduced portfolios and other types of performance assessment. With the passage of time, the variety of assessment methods has grown. Still, undertaking successful assessment remains a challenge, particularly at large, comprehensive universities where colleges are often viewed as quite independent of one another. At Ball State, a Doctoral I level university with six colleges and more than 19,000 students, we have developed an approach that combines university-wide assessment activities with assessment activities that are specific to the disciplines.

This paper provides a description of Ball State University's assessment program. Emphasis is on the ways in which Ball State has dealt with the challenges involved in coordinating successful assessment. The approaches used to integrate university-wide assessment activities with discipline-specific activities are highlighted. Examples of programmatic changes based on assessment findings are also included. The paper ends with a discussion of several overriding assessment issues.

Objectives of Ball State University's Assessment Program

Successful assessment requires clear purposes. As described by the Provost and Vice-President for Academic Affairs in his fall 1991 statement, the overall goals of Ball State's academic assessment program are to evaluate academic programs and to enhance student learning. The Provost's statement articulates six major objectives that have guided the activities of the program. These include determining the knowledge and attitudes of students when they enter the university, when they complete the general studies program, and when they finish their major. Other objectives include determining the factors that contribute to program completion, determining students' satisfaction with their educational experiences, and assessing students' success in employment and further education. On the basis of Ball State's assessment plan, each objective is addressed through one or more major activities.

University-Wide Assessment Activities

University-wide assessment activities are those activities that are beyond the scope of an individual college or department. These activities help to address overall issues of learning that are important to the university and help the units of the university to see goals they have in common. They provide economies of scale in carrying out various projects, for example, surveying seniors and alumni. They also allow for disaggregation of results so that discipline-specific information can be gained. University-wide assessment activities concentrate on learning objectives that cut across discipline lines. Often these learning objectives, such as clear communication and ability to work in groups, appear in the university's mission statement. The assessment of general education frequently follows an approach that is university-wide.

University-wide assessment activities at Ball State include standardized testing of freshmen and upper-division students. The university uses the College Basic Academic Subjects Examination to study the knowledge of entering freshmen and their growth through the general studies program. In addition, all juniors participate in a writing competency examination. Students who fail to pass the exam after several attempts are required to complete an intensive writing course.

Ball State has developed a freshmen survey that results in an individualized report for each student. Academic advisors and residence hall directors receive condensed versions of the students' reports. Freshmen survey data are also used to conduct retention studies that have increased our understanding of the characteristics and behaviors that contribute to program completion. Surveys of seniors and alumni allow us to track the experiences, attitudes, and successes of our graduates. Results from the latter surveys have contributed to the university's continued focus on computer competency.

Most of these activities are carried out by the Office of Academic Assessment that was created in 1987. The office has developed a series of strategies to report results. For example, each major assessment activity results in a written report describing the purpose of the activity and the findings of the project. In order to provide an overview of assessment projects, a summary report of assessment findings from several projects is updated annually. These reports are sent to senior administrators, deans, and department chairs. Department chairs circulate the reports to their faculty. A series of Assessment Notes that includes six or seven major findings about a topic is also distributed directly to individual faculty members. Extracts of studies often appear in university publications. In addition to written reports, project results are shared through presentations and discussions. When practical, controversial results are shared individually with interested parties in advance of written reports.

Integrating University-Wide Assessment with Assessment in the Disciplines

In designing its assessment program, it was Ball State's intention that university-wide assessment activities would be integrated with discipline-specific assessment activities. This has been accomplished in a number of ways. First, each university-wide project is managed by a committee of representatives from across the university. Generally, at least one faculty member from each college will serve on the committee. This achieves several purposes. It guarantees that concerns of the disciplines will be represented in planning and it creates a vehicle for the dissemination of results. Further, it provides an important avenue for the collaboration that is so important to assessment.

Second, for most university-wide projects, the students are assured of confidentiality, but not anonymity. Because students are identified, we can obtain demographic information from the student database. This allows us to create separate reports for each college illustrating the responses of its own majors. These reports contain departmental level tables with college and university comparative figures. Each college can then compare its results to university averages.

Another successful strategy has been to allow colleges and departments to prepare supplements for university-wide surveys. Nine supplements were prepared for the most recent alumni survey. These supplements were mailed with the main survey to the relevant alumni. This approach allows the colleges and/or departments to prepare questions that are of particular concern to them.

Assessment in the Six Colleges

In addition to drawing on the results of university-wide assessment activities, each of Ball State's six colleges has adopted its own unique approach to assessment. Each college in turn sets expectations for its departments. For example, the College of Sciences and Humanities has asked each department to create a separate assessment plan. In contrast, the College of Architecture and Planning has adopted a college-wide approach to assessment.

As a result of this variety, there are a great number of discipline-specific activities in place across the university including portfolios, standardized tests, surveys, focus groups, classroom assessment, and other methods. The activities are chosen by the departments and colleges and carried out by these units, often with support from the Office of Academic Assessment.

For example, in fall 1991, the College of Business began its assessment efforts with a complete review of the curriculum. This was followed by course-based assessment of the undergraduate core and major. This effort has led to major curriculum revisions including the introduction of a communications course and the redesign of the production management course.

Assessment of General Education

As with discipline-specific assessment, assessment of general studies is also supported by university-wide activities. For example, the senior survey asks seniors to rate their preparation in a number of areas drawn from the goals of the general studies program.

Extensive assessment information has also been collected through the recently completed four-year cycle of general studies course assessment that was initiated in fall 1991. Departments with at least one general studies course were asked to rate the university's programmatic goals for general studies and to demonstrate that each course was meeting these goals. This approach allowed the departments to develop their own assessment tools. Following a predetermined calendar and a set of reporting guidelines, each department assessed its own general studies courses and prepared a report for the General Studies Subcommittee of the University Senate. This committee reviewed all of the information and issued a set of conclusions and recommendations based on the departmental reports. This ambitious project has led to recommendations for change in the general studies program, including the requirement for a capstone experience.

Overriding Assessment Issues

Although each university develops its own approach to assessment, there are several overriding issues that need to be addressed by all practitioners of assessment. These issues include involving faculty in assessment, motivating students to participate in assessment, and using assessment results to create change. Ball State has addressed these issues in a variety of ways.

Although there are many faculty who enthusiastically embrace assessment, there are some faculty who are not familiar with what assessment is and confuse it with faculty evaluation. Others have an informed view of assessment, but are reluctant to participate. Ball State's major assessment efforts have been greatly facilitated by various kinds of faculty development initiatives. The Office of Academic Assessment conducts workshops to help departments plan, design, and carry out assessment activities. As part of this effort an Assessment Workbook was created and shared with the faculty. The Office also awards summer assessment grants to faculty who are designing and carrying out assessment activities. Limited travel funds to support faculty who wish to present results of their assessment activities at conferences and workshops are also available. These faculty development efforts have been very successful in encouraging faculty participation in assessment.

Involving students in assessment presents a similar challenge. Students need to know the purposes of assessment. During orientation, Ball State provides a flyer for entering students that provides information about assessment. Students also need to receive results from the assessments in which they participate. Our freshmen survey project results in individualized reports for students that are available a day or two after they take the survey. Student motivation has also been increased through a series of incentives. Generally, one or two prize winners are selected from all of the students who participate in our survey projects. Perhaps most importantly, the commitment of the faculty to assessment has a big impact on student involvement. This provides another strong rationale for faculty development.

The most challenging job for assessment practitioners is to ensure that assessment results will be used. Some of the most important decisions about usage can be made at the initial planning stages, such as who will review results and who will make recommendations. At Ball State, each college addressed these issues as it developed its assessment plans. For example, the already existing curriculum committee became the "home" for assessment results in the College of Business. The College of Sciences and Humanities created a separate assessment committee. This college has also required that all requests for programmatic change be accompanied by assessment information.

Providing Support for Assessment

Ball State's experiences demonstrate clearly that assessment must be supported by the university. This support can take many forms and may or may not include a centralized office. Most universities are rich in resources that can be used to enhance assessment. Institutional research offices, student affairs offices, and computer centers often have expertise that can be drawn upon. Many faculty are more than happy to share their knowledge and experience. Regardless of the structure, faculty need assistance if they are to carry out successful assessment activities. Reading materials, presentations, workshops, travel funds, and stipends provide valuable support for the faculty as they undertake assessment.

Is Assessment Worth It?

Ball State has been involved with assessment for several years. Often there has been apathy, if not resistance. It appears, nevertheless, that assessment has the potential to improve the education of our students. Many of the colleges have introduced programmatic changes based on their assessment results. University-wide assessment activities have contributed to our understanding of our students and their experiences and successes, as well as problem areas. The process of creating and discussing assessment has had positive results. It has helped to focus attention on issues of teaching and learning. Assessment has provided us with a very important means to "mind our own business."

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Closing the Loop: Implementation of a Student Success Initiative Through Program Improvement Teams

Jerrilyn Brewer
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In 1991, Western Wisconsin Technical College (WWTC) completed its last NCA accreditation visit and received continued accreditation with the next comprehensive evaluation in ten years. The college used this event as a springboard for many new and important initiatives. The self-study process and NCA visit solidified the college's commitment to a continuous improvement philosophy and led to the implementation of many management practices based on the teachings of quality expert, Dr. Edwards Deming. One of those practices was the empowerment of people throughout the organization to take responsibility for and implement activities that will improve their work area. As this practice evolved, it was determined that the best way to do this was through Program Improvement Teams and Process Improvement Teams. The NCA visit also laid the groundwork for the college's Assessment Plan and its Institutional Effectiveness Model. These initiatives provided a framework for using data to measure student academic achievement and to improve the teaching and learning process.

Over the next few years, as these projects were implemented at the college, it became evident that these separate initiatives had to be coordinated and integrated in order to be most effective. As the focus of each of these activities was to help students succeed at the college and to accomplish their goals, the integration of these various initiatives became known as the Student Success Initiative. Its purpose was to close the loop and help students achieve the goals that they set for themselves upon entering the college.

The Student Success Initiative is outlined in Illustration 1. The focus of the initiative is to develop an attitude on the part of each staff member that his/her job is to help our students be academically and socially successful. This attitude needs to permeate the college and guide our decisions as we change our practices and activities.

This Initiative takes a multifaceted approach to student success. Primacy is placed on the students, especially those who have unique and diverse needs. It bridges the gap that often exists between instruction and support services. It will be accomplished by developing pre- and concurrent enrollment support for students, by developing indicators to measure student academic achievement and institutional effectiveness, and by mobilizing the necessary resources to support the project.

There are three primary components in the Student Success Model that need to be coordinated and implemented. They include: 1) admission and counseling, 2) academic support, and 3) teaching and learning. As the thrust of educational reform is on the classroom and the student, we have chosen to focus our discussion on the third component, the improvement of teaching and learning. The teaching and learning component will strive to form a connection among curriculum, instruction, and assessment.

General Education core competencies will be integrated throughout the curriculum to provide students a real world context in which to apply math, science, social science, and communication skills. Four strategies will be employed by program improvement teams as they redesign their curricula:

1. integrated courses/units will be developed in a performance-based format that modifies both academic and occupational curricula;
2. a work-based learning component will be included as part of program modification/development;
3. core abilities will be identified and infused into each program curricula; and
4. cross-department program improvement teams will develop cross-curricular thematic projects.

WWTC has participated in a partnership to develop an educationally sound performance-based instructional design model entitled the "Wisconsin Instructional Design System" (WIDS). WIDS is a computer software package designed to help create performance-based curriculum for courses, workshops, and programs. Teachers will use this tool to develop study guides that include competencies, performance standards, core abilities, learning objectives, learning activities, and performance assessment strategies. The outcome of this activity is to develop an applied, integrated, and authentic curriculum.

A key component of this project is the work of the Program Improvement Teams. During this first year of implementation, four teams have been established. They include teams in Graphics Technologies, Respiratory Care, Office Technologies, and Electronics. These teams will be the models for which each of the sixty plus programs at the college will pattern their activities. Each team is being provided with the training and ongoing support they will need to implement strategies leading to the success of students in their program areas. As each program is unique and each class of students present a unique set of challenges, each team will be provided the flexibility and support it needs for its particular situation.

A good example of this is the new admission policy developed by the college. This policy calls for an open admission that will allow all students to enter the college and partake of support services available to them. However, each program area has the flexibility to establish program admission criteria that ensure students have the necessary skills and aptitudes to be successful upon entering their particular program. Currently, the faculty on the Graphics Program Improvement Team are the first team working on admission standards for students entering their programs.

A further example of the work being done by Program Improvement Teams is the initiatives of the Office Technologies Team. This team has recently formed and participated in team training. Participants had several meetings to seek information and learn about the objectives of "teams" and what would be their responsibilities if they became a pilot team. A lengthy list of questions was reviewed with the college's administration, and the faculty decided they wanted to be involved in shaping the future of this initiative.

The initial work of the Office Technologies Team included establishing a mission statement for its department, developing a list of goals to be accomplished, and the identification of assessment tools to be used to measure student achievement and their success in meeting their goals. Some of the early initiatives of this team include:

- identifying a team coordinator and participating in team training;
- identifying workplace performance standards using a modified DACUM;
- revised curriculum to meet these standards;
- laddering the vocational program to allow students to transition to an associate degree program;
- new program brochures;
- an orientation program for students;
- a new mentoring program;

Student Success Model

"Enhance the success of every student at Western Wisconsin Technical College"

- move aggressively to a synergistic, self sustaining environment that promotes student success.
- establish program and process improvement teams
- mobilize and reallocate human and financial resources
- implement the student success plan for:
  - student access and retention
  - academic support/enrichment
  - teaching and learning
- develop institutional effectiveness measures

Recruitment
Marketing
Preadmission
Leads
Community Contacts

Student Access & Retention

- Customer Focus
- Career Educational Plan
- Orientation
- Registration
- Applicant Assessment
- Financial Aid
- Case Management

Academic Support & Enrichment

- Academic Skills Center
- GOAL
- Tutoring
- Opportunity Center
- Disabilities Services

Student Access & Retention

- Curriculum
- Instruction
- Resources
- Assessment
- Technology

Graduation
Employment
Follow-up

Program Improvement Teams

Membership

Faculty
Managers
Counselors
Admission Advisors
Support Staff

Activities

Case Management	Data Management
Student Advising	Training and Development
Problem Solving	Resource Management
Program Evaluation	Collaborative Planning

- cross-departmental cooperation for the integration of core competencies;
- development of a personal and professional development class;
- team teaching;
- inviting adjunct team members (Deans, Counselors, Support Staff, etc.) to team meetings as needed; and
- many more activities.

Each of these activities is an example of what can be done and needs to be done for our students to be successful.

Along with the many new activities that faculty and staff are undertaking comes a list of concerns. Some of these challenges include:

- maintaining standards and retaining students;
- offering courses in new time frames to meet diverse student needs;
- keeping up with technology;
- time for classes, prep, advising, team meetings, communications, and employer contacts;
- maintaining a harmonious working relationship among team members;
- recordkeeping; and
- many other concerns and challenges.

In summary, the Student Success Initiative is a changing attitude among the faculty and staff at WWTC to focus on the success of each of the students. The model that is presented is a "living model" that will be molded by team members as they meet the challenges of their day to day work. The model is a guideline for integrating and coordinating the many divisions and departments at the college to share resources to enhance the teaching and learning environment.

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Implementing the Student Assessment Program: The Devil's in the Details

Sharon Shetlar

Changing the culture of an institution is a difficult task but one important for organizational effectiveness. Schein, (1984) identified three phases in the life cycle of an institution, birth and growth, mid-life, and mature. He articulated ways to change culture according to each phase. In new and growing organizations, cultural change occurs to clarify, articulate or elaborate, and to remain flexible in light of a turbulent external environment. An organization in mid-life can change its culture but requires some form of outside intervention and "culture consciousness raising." Mature organizations have an internal stability and comfort that prevent innovation. Change in mature organizations requires self-insight; it is a painful process that elicits strong resistance, and it may require replacing members who wish to hold on to all of the original culture.

Southwestern College, a 111-year-old institution, fits Schein's mature model. Some insight necessary to effect cultural change developed during 1989-92 as a new administration took office, when a new mission was adopted, and when the North Central Association insisted on documentation of the effectiveness with which the institution was fulfilling its mission. Change in the college's culture since then has been evidenced by the fact trustees, administration, and faculty met together to decide the mission, and how the institution wanted to live out its mission. The faculty reorganized and restructured itself. A new integrative studies (general education) curriculum was created and implemented. The change process also brought about a resolve to be a data-driven institution.

Mapping the Territory

When the changes began to come about, Southwestern College administration and faculty already identified the institution as one involved with assessment of students and program effectiveness. However, investigation of assessment activities occurring before 1992 revealed fragmented, inconsistent efforts, and decision making that was not data driven. A centrally organized student-assessment structure did not exist.

For some in the institution, insight concerning student assessment paralleled the development of the integrative studies program. However, there was not a critical mass who understood the concept. The integrative studies program was developed around outcomes identified as flowing from the institution's mission and related assumptions, but no provisions were made to assess its effectiveness in promoting academic growth. Academic programs offering major programs of study and programs offering supporting course work were also lacking plans to determine student achievement. The common notion surrounding assessment was that it happened through individual student evaluation in classes leading to individual student grades.

Clearly, the institution needed a comprehensive, purposeful program documenting student academic achievement. At the same time, faculty and administration were skeptical about how it could be done and how useful it would be. Developing a pervasive, common understanding of assessment and its usefulness was a logical next step. The question remained, could the culture continue to change?

Understanding Through Process

Approaching the issue of assessment from two fronts was necessary. First, the administration needed to understand the difference between assessing students to evaluate courses, faculty, or dormitory life, and assessing students for the impact the college had on their movement toward identified outcomes. Second, the faculty needed to understand the difference between evaluating a student's knowledge gained from meeting the goals of a course and issuing grades, and collecting information that would provide evidence about how the curriculum as a whole affects the student's growth toward the outcomes identified by the institution.

Both fronts were approached by personal surveys of faculty and administration. Interviews with 50% of the faculty and administration revealed agreement on the outcomes flowing from the mission. Survey participants ranked the importance of the outcomes. Faculty representing every program offered at Southwestern College participated and agreed the outcomes were pertinent both to their disciplines and to the general education of all Southwestern College students. The personal interviews provided an educational opportunity as the concept of student assessment was explained and its value discussed with each faculty member and administrator.

Survey results indicated assessment was taking place within most programs. However, data were not being employed to provide useful information on which program effectiveness could be based. The information gained from the survey provided a basis for developing the Student Assessment Program.

Data Collection Made Simple

Data collection began in the new assessment program by testing the critical thinking skills and the disposition for critical thinking (Facione & Facione, 1992) of freshmen students enrolled in the integrative studies program. The rationale for beginning with freshmen and with quantitative data was that it was the easiest to do. All that was needed were decisions about the instruments to use, where the cohort could be assembled, when to administer the test, and who would score the test.

Outcomes can be assessed using a variety of methods; one method can be as reliable and valid as the next. At Southwestern College a decision was made to use multiple measures, but to begin by collecting quantitative data. Qualitative data would be collected as faculty became more familiar with methods appropriate to qualitative research. For some faculty, particularly those schooled in quantitative research methods, qualitative data was suspect. For other faculty, particularly those who experience quantitative research as less relevant to their discipline, quantitative data seemed less helpful.

Faculty in programs other than integrative studies were encouraged to identify outcomes specific to their disciplines and develop a process for student assessment. All the assessment efforts were intended to be simple to administer and to render data useful for validating institutional effectiveness and for guiding institutional improvement.

The Devil's in the Details

Schein (1986) identifies three change mechanisms appropriate for mature organizations: coercive persuasion, turnaround, and reorganization and rebirth. With reorganization and rebirth the carrier of the culture is destroyed, an unlikely prospect for Southwestern College. The most likely way for the culture to change with regard to assessment is for a turnaround to occur.

The turnaround mechanism requires the institution's culture to unfreeze, usually facilitated through insight or external pressure. Change is possible then only if there is a manager or team with a clear sense of where the organization needs to go, a model of how to change the culture to get there, and the power to implement the model (Schein, 1986). Schein also points out the importance of supporting members of the organization as they experience the anxiety inherent in change. Turnarounds also must involve all the organization because that is the only way dysfunctional elements of the old culture become apparent to everyone. When the dysfunctional elements become clear, new assumptions can be developed through teaching, coaching, changing structure and process, rewarding evidence of learning new ways, and by creating slogans, stories, myths, and rituals.

The Southwestern College culture could be described as informal, anecdotal, intuitive, and patriarchal. Some would go so far as to describe the institution, along with all of academia, as arrogant. Still, the culture includes a value for people and their ideas. For the institution to embrace assessment as a concept and to habitually use student assessment as a basis for decision making, attendance needs to be given to the components of the "turnaround mechanism" in relation to the existing culture. Herein are the details where the devil resides.

At Southwestern College external pressure was supplied by the North Central Association when it mandated student assessment as a requirement for accreditation. Insight came with individuals who were focusing on the new teaching/learning paradigm and outcomes. There were a few individuals who formed a team to manage assessment and to create a model. Changing this one part of the culture was facilitated by using another part of the existing culture. For example, the informality of the institution provided a way to have dialogue about student assessment, reassuring the anxious and providing opportunities for the dysfunctional to learn.

Stayin' Alive, Stayin' Alive

Schein (1985) speaks briefly of refreezing as part of the change process. It occurs when the "new cultural elements solve problems or reduce anxieties." Southwestern College is not quite ready to say the refreezing process has occurred, but there is evidence of it happening. The Assessment Committee actively supports student assessment in all academic programs.

The Curriculum Committee in charge of the integrative studies program is preparing to phase in assessment of outcomes previously not assessed. Programs are required to submit aggregate information about student growth and how they use the information to improve the quality of the education. However, to say the institution is data driven would be inaccurate.

Conclusion

The student assessment initiative begun two years ago continues. The college has learned some things about itself, its culture, and about the freshmen entering Southwestern in 1994. For example, it takes a lot of time to change a culture, and to be successful an internal education process must continue. The old adage, "Try it...you'll like it," is true. Not all programs across the institution have the same understanding of student assessment. Those who have progressed to the point of collecting and using data have found the information provided to be helpful, and believe student assessment is an essential component of providing quality education and being accountable to the public.

Southwestern College has collected data with regard to critical thinking skills of entering freshmen over the past three years and has recorded a three percentile point increase in the scores of the 1995 freshman class compared to the students entering in 1994 and 1993. The college is looking forward to the time when it will be able to generalize about the impact of the Southwestern College experience on student growth with regard to critical thinking. That will occur at the end of the 1996-97 academic year.

Southwestern College, like all accredited institutions in higher education, has been asked to be accountable in a way that is new and strange. The temptation is to assign success or failure to individuals who can or cannot make the change within themselves. Schein's theory on change can help an organization see otherwise. In actuality, the devil *is* in the details of the cultural change process.

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From Ideas to Reality: Creating a Culture of Assessment for Improvement

Deborah Fordham
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Overview of West Virginia State College

WVSC is located on an 85 acre campus approximately eight miles from the city of Charleston, the capital of West Virginia, and is the largest institution of higher education in the greater metropolitan area, in which one fourth of the population of the state is concentrated. The fall 1995 head-count enrollment was 4,486; the average age is 26; 40% of our students attend part-time; more than 90% of our students commute; more than two-thirds work at least part-time off campus. The majority of our students come from homes where a high school diploma is the highest level of educational attainment, not very surprising given that West Virginia has the lowest college- going rate and is also one of the poorest states in the nation. The primary mission of the College focuses on strong baccalaureate and associate degree programs in the arts and sciences and in professional studies: WVSC offers 17 baccalaureate degrees and 19 associate degrees.

Founded in 1891 as the state's land-grant institution for blacks, WVSC integrated the campus in 1954 with such style that the college became known nationally as a "living laboratory of human relations": that phrase is now the official motto of the college. In 1927, WVSC was the first black land-grant college nationally to achieve regional accreditation and is proud of the fact that the institution holds the longest continuing North Central accreditation record of all the state's public four-year colleges and universities. In a state with a minority population of approximately 3 %, WVSC maintains a minority student population of 12% through an active recruiting program. In addition, WVSC has the highest proportion of minority administrators, faculty, and staff of any college or university in the state.

The History of Outcomes Assessment at WVSC

Like many other institutions, West Virginia State College had various assessment programs and projects in place long before the creation of a formal institutional plan. The first WVSC Assessment Task Force (created in 1988 immediately following a North Central Team Visit) had developed and implemented a *Graduate Exit Survey* in 1989. In 1991 the General Education Advisory Faculty had created the first plan to assess student learning in general education, and faculty in our associate and baccalaureate programs had developed general plans to assess learning in degree programs. An Alumni Survey had been implemented in 1992 by the planning and advancement division. Several departments had started intensive work on improving and expanding assessment of student learning in the major. In some cases, this focus resulted from specialty accreditation guidelines (e.g., NCATE, ABET, etc.), while in other cases it was due to departmental faculty's recognition of the need for more complete information for program review, curriculum evaluation, and course development.

In the spring of 1993, the primary question for faculty and administrators was not whether to do assessment, but how to do so effectively, given both internal and external constraints. Faculty and administrators wanted to develop a "proactive" approach to assessment for continuous improvement, rather than continue in the somewhat disjointed "reactive" mode in which we had begun our assessment efforts. Faculty who had developed and implemented various assessment strategies (with varying degrees of success) wanted technical advice and support. The first Assessment Task Force had recommended in 1991 that a full-time professional staff position be created to provide both academic support services needed by faculty and to coordinate institutional and departmental assessment projects. In May of 1993 the college's first Coordinator of Student Assessment was hired and the Office of Student Assessment was created, using funding secured through a Federal Title III grant.

In the summer and fall of 1993, the Coordinator of Student Assessment met with faculty and administrators who had been involved in past assessment initiatives and completed a needs analysis. Using the information gained, the Coordinator developed an action plan for 93-94 with input from faculty leaders and administrators, including the Vice-President for Academic Affairs, The Provost of the Community & Technical College, and the Chairs of the NCA Self-Study and Policy Committees. In late fall, the President created a standing all-college committee, the WVSC Student Assessment Steering Committee, and charged the group with the responsibility of developing, implementing, and managing an integrated institutional assessment program. The Student Assessment Steering Committee (SASC), chaired by the Assessment Coordinator, revised and approved the 93-94 Assessment Action Plan and began groundwork on the *Assessment for Improvement Plan*, one component of an expanded *Institutional Academic Plan (1995-2000)*. At the same time, we were involved in a comprehensive self-study of our institution in preparation for an NCA team visit in April of 1995.

While the date of the NCA visit was certainly a factor in our planning efforts, the work of the Student Assessment Steering Committee (SASC) encompassed much more than simply preparing for the NCA visit. We wanted to revise, expand, and integrate our current institutional survey projects and develop better links between assessment in the major and assessment of general education. We wanted to make the best possible use of limited resources and apply what we had learned from our experiences with our "first generation" assessment efforts. Most importantly, we wanted to build an assessment program that would lead to a culture of continuous improvement of teaching and learning and not just to reports that occupied space but provided little useful information to faculty and administrators. The SASC Action Plan for 93 -94 focused on four main areas: getting the Assessment Office operational; completing a needs analysis to determine our status in various areas relative to standards of best practice (from NCA, AAHE, etc.); identifying the services needed by faculty and staff; and developing an institutional communication network for the sharing of information and resources. Once this groundwork had been completed, the *Assessment for Improvement Plan* could be finalized and then implemented in the fall of 1995.

The needs analysis completed by the Assessment Coordinator during the summer and early fall of 1993 revealed that the primary concern of faculty was assessment of learning in the major. Although more than three-fourths of our academic programs had some form of an assessment plan, there was little consistency or communication. The Assessment Coordinator made a series of informational presentations to department chairs and program directors throughout the 1993-94 year. These presentations focused on three primary areas: the components of an effective assessment for improvement program in the major, the North Central guidelines for assessment of academic achievement, and strategies for building linkages between the various levels of assessment to better use limited resources. Departments and programs began by developing or revising program mission statements and program learning outcomes. At the same time, three task forces of the SASC began intensive work on three specific priorities identified by the needs analysis: an evaluation of the current institutional surveys being used (including the revision of the Graduate Exit Survey), the development of a "principles of practice" statement, and the evaluation of current information management and communication systems. Alexander Astin's conceptual model of assessment for excellence (Inputs - Environment/Experiences- Outcomes) helped us frame our discussions and set our goals.

During the spring of 1994, the General Education Advisory Faculty (GEAF) began revising and extending the 1991 *Plan to Assess Learning in General Education*. This faculty committee followed the same process being used in the departments and began with the stated learning outcomes. As faculty on GEAF reached consensus on clearer articulations of the core learning outcomes, the focus of meetings shifted to the next step: identification of appropriate ways of measuring student progress towards the essential learning outcomes. Various questionnaires, pre-tests, post-tests, and portfolio projects were evaluated and revised as necessary to better measure student learning and provide usable information to faculty. The section on the *Graduate Exit Survey* dealing with general education was also revised to more clearly focus on the core outcomes. This work on developing more useful, valid, and manageable assessment strategies and reporting systems in the general education core is ongoing.

As faculty examined the issue of student progress and documentation of student learning, it became clear that easily accessible baseline data about our entering students was limited to GPA information and ACT or SAT scores. A major addition to the institutional level of the assessment program was made in the summer of 1994 with the implementation of an *Entering Student Survey* project in conjunction with the Higher Education Research Institute at UCLA. Entering freshmen and transfer students were asked to complete a student information form supplied by the Cooperative Institutional Research Project at UCLA. The *Entering Student Survey* will provide baseline information on employment hours, college goals, educational attainment goals, social attitudes, etc., which can be compared to information gained from the *Graduate Exit Survey* later on.

At the completion of the self-study year, the Student Assessment Steering Committee had accomplished the vast majority of the tasks outlined in the Assessment Action Plan and began shifting focus to the articulation of the five- year plan that would guide the strategic plans for assessment of student learning for every unit on campus. The same planning process and plan format were used by all of the groups working on the various components of the *Institutional Academic Plan:* this approach helped to create much higher levels of consistency and communication than had been achieved in the past. Drafts of the *Assessment for Improvement Plan* were regularly distributed to various constituencies across campus for comments and suggestions. The final *Institutional Academic Plan* (including the *Assessment for Improvement Plan*) was officially completed and approved by the College's President on December 15, 1994. In April of 1995, the NCA Team visiting WVSC reviewed our plan and the feedback was very positive: the team recommended continued accreditation for the institution with the next comprehensive evaluation in ten years.

WVSC's *Assessment for Improvement Plan* (1995-2000)

The perspective of WVSC's *AI Plan* is global rather than specific, providing broad goals and objectives rather than specific strategies. At WVSC, faculty ownership and management of the assessment of student learning is at the core of the faculty culture. At the program level, the department chair or program director, along with program faculty, are responsible for the assessment of student learning in that program. The Director of General Education, along with the General Education Advisory Faculty, oversee assessment of general education core outcomes. The Office of Student Assessment oversees two of the institutional assessments (the *Entering Student Survey* and the *Graduate Exit Survey*) and works closely with the two other offices responsible for the *Alumni Survey* and the *Student Satisfaction Inventory*. The four broad goals of the AI Plan for the 1995-2000 time period are:

- to institutionalize an approach to assessment of student achievement which rests on Astin's' Input-Environment-Outcomes model and which is consistent across departments, across divisions and across levels of student experience;
- to develop and maintain comprehensive communication and information management systems across all levels of the institution so that student progress data are appropriately collected, shared, and used in all levels of decision-making;
- to develop an institution-wide commitment to continuous quality improvement of programs and services;
- to integrate current (and future) assessment activities/programs into one organized system for documenting and improving student learning and development.

For each of these goal areas, the Student Assessment Steering Committee articulated various objectives for the Assessment Coordinator and the Student Assessment Steering Committee as well as various recommendations about future resources and possible changes in policy and procedures that would promote achievement of the plan's goals by the year 2000. Again, the specific strategies and action plans are the responsibility of the various departments and support units. A tentative timeline for completion of various objectives was also included We approached this document as a "working plan" and built in a yearly evaluation and revision process through the

Student Assessment Steering Committee. (Complete copies of the WVSC *Assessment for Improvement Plan* and the WVSC *Assessment Report* submitted to NCA/CIHE are available in the Assessment Resource Room and in the Self-Study Resource Room at the Annual Meeting.)

Implementation of the *Assessment for Improvement Plan*

Although the formal implementation date was set for fall of 1995, several projects were begun before the official implementation date. Funding was found for a full-time research assistant in the Office of Student Assessment and this second full-time professional staff person was added to the office in August of 1995 to better meet the needs of faculty and staff. In spring of 1995, faculty in programs and on the General Education Advisory Faculty made revisions in courses and programs based on use of assessment data from the previous year. A new level of the reporting system for the *Graduate Exit Survey* was added to provide department chairs, program directors, and division deans with both qualitative and quantitative data from their majors. A *Student Progress Data Index* was published in spring of 1995 as a resource guide for faculty and staff.

Work continues on the program level, with approximately 60% of our academic programs still developing their feedback and reporting systems. While the *AI Plan* proposed that the WVSC *Program Assessment Guide* (detailing the assessment systems for all academic programs and general education) would be finished by the end of the 95-96 academic year, the North Central team recommended that we aim for the end of the 96-97 year. The SASC is still holding to the original target, however, with the understanding that all assessment for improvement systems need to be flexible. Some departments are further ahead than others: all departments and programs are involved.

The NCA Team cautioned against relying too heavily on survey data and urged the inclusion of multiple direct measures of student learning to the assessment systems of all academic programs. These direct measures are being developed, both at the major program level and in general education. For many of our programs, this will be a long-term process: few of the available standardized tests of content areas meet our needs. In several of our programs, we are developing local tools to measure knowledge and skill (both pen and paper tests and performance/product assessments), using a criterion-referenced approach rather than a norm-referenced approach. We have already developed common syllabi, assessments, and evaluation/grading systems in several of our multi-section general education courses (e.g., English 101, Math 101, GenEd 100 and 200, etc.), which serve both general education and various majors.

Hindsight...Foresight...Oversight

One way of summarizing what we have learned at WVSC over the last three years is to say we have developed a multidimensional perspective through which we examine our assessment for improvement system: simultaneously looking backwards and forward while looking at both the components and the whole. We have realized that success in the present requires a clear understanding of both the successes and failures of the past. We have also realized that the process is just as critical as the product; in some cases process is the product. During the workshop, the presenters will share specific planning tools, examples of assessment strategies, suggestions for faculty development, strategies for turning data into information, and examples of the kinds of cultural change that are occurring on our campus as a result of our assessment efforts.

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Developing and Implementing a Comprehensive, Coordinated Campus-Wide Assessment Plan

Deborah Olsen

Assessment of student learning offers great opportunities and great challenges at a large Research I university. The vast resources and research expertise available at a Research I make possible a wide-range of assessment strategies and instructional innovations. At the same time, issues of scope and coordination become more difficult. Successful implementation of assessment on any campus requires honest recognition of both the rewards and the obstacles associated with assessment: its costs and benefits from the perspective of faculty, students, administrators, and the institution as a whole. Implementation does not begin when the plan is complete; it starts with the early and often difficult discussions of the goals for assessment and the principles that guide it, and continues through more specific planning of general education, the major, and graduate studies. Assessment is a way of thinking, a philosophy of education that stresses better understanding of student learning and continuous improvement of instruction. The minute faculty begin to seriously consider these issues assessment has begun. Moreover, without the investment and commitment of faculty and administrators, the best of plans will lie fallow. If the assessment movement and its proponents have had a failing it is that their belief in assessment and its value to the educational enterprise has sometimes made them too anxious to move forward and implement an assessment agenda that is not fully understood and supported by the faculty who will need to carry it out.

I believe that having struggled with many of the complex and difficult issues associated with assessment, Indiana University Bloomington has developed a constructive and fairly sophisticated approach to assessment of student learning, one that promises great benefit to faculty and students alike. In this paper I will briefly review some of the strategies and procedures that have helped to make the planning and implementation processes a success.

☐ Establish the Basics

As the North Central Association has often indicated, a campus wide assessment program requires the *endorsement of higher level administrators*. The support of the administration cannot guarantee faculty investment, but a clear lack of support from this quarter signals sure failure. At Bloomington, our Chancellor and Deans were leaders in developing a set of campus principles for assessment—underscoring our commitment to instructional improvement but also indicating that assessment would be relevant to normal review processes, as well as to progress toward key initiatives in undergraduate education. The administration charged the Office of Academic Affairs with oversight, dedicated staff in that office to assisting units with assessment, and provided funds that would help units with start-up costs associated with development of measures.

Although it is relatively easy to define the "first principles" that an assessment program must address, reaching consensus on these issues is more difficult. For example, is assessment to be carried out for instructional improvement, enhanced accountability, or both? Are units generating assessment data responsible to present those data in detail (e.g., at an annual review) or simply to report generally on activities? The more input faculty have in these discussions and the clearer they are about the principles established, the more ownership and control faculty have over the process and the greater their willingness to participate in assessment. The efficiency of these discussions can be increased by gathering examples of the principles established at other institutions (e.g., Keene College) and selecting and adapting to suit your own institutional needs.

There must be both an *organizational and budgetary infrastructure* to support assessment. Especially at a large research university, the organizational structure must have linkages flexible enough to accommodate the range of goals and timetables established by different units and coordinated enough that the activities undertaken by different units and at different levels of the campus interrelate in consistent and meaningful ways. A successful organizational structure will serve two basic functions:

— communication about assessment activities—communication between campus level administration and academic units, and among academic units themselves and

— support—in the form of fiscal resources, procedures for formal recognition, available expertise (staff versed in assessment methods), and auxiliary services (development or enhancement of testing, teaching, or survey services on campus that can assist faculty in carrying out assessment).

A budgetary infrastructure is of no less importance to a successful assessment program. At Indiana University Bloomington we were fortunate to have in place a management structure, "Responsibility Centered Management" (RCM), that charged academic units with *fiscal and academic* planning and decision-making. Thus our very structure (atypical for an academic institution) invests the resource and planning functions essential to assessment in the faculty and unit administrators who must carry it out. Moreover, the assessment data collected are valued in an RCM environment where no activity is cost neutral.

☐ Create an Inventory of Current Activities Relevant to Assessment

The staff person(s) charged with overseeing and assisting assessment activities can contribute enormously to the development and implementation of the campus assessment plan by compiling a comprehensive inventory of existing studies and programs, and of how they relate to specific campus goals for assessment. This type of inventory provides concrete illustrations of how assessment can be (and is being) carried out, reveals where there is a firm foundation for future assessment, and where much more work is needed. A more indirect, but no less significant, benefit is that such an inventory validates faculty's past and ongoing efforts to evaluate teaching and learning, and introduces assessment as an enhancement of those efforts rather than a simple criticism of them.

☐ Provide Units with Frequent, Specific Information about Planning and Implementation

It is important to establish timelines and general outlines for unit-based plans and implementation, but not sufficient. Because they are often not relevant to their discipline, many academic units are unfamiliar with the kinds of social science techniques, quantitative or qualitative, that underlie most methods of assessment. Furthermore, many units are unaware of the national debate over higher education, the specter of SPRE's, and the larger public and legislative context for institutional accountability. Units can be assisted greatly through workshops and individual consultation that help them better understand why there is a need for assessment and how best to address that need in terms appropriate to their department and discipline.

Workshops should be concise and straightforward. We are asking for a specific product, the plan, and faculty's initial concerns focus on the parameters of the task to be accomplished. Once the task is clear and appears to be of manageable proportions receptivity improves and more complex issues can be addressed. Don't be above providing page lengths, timetables, and an outline of the plan's component parts. As one chair at our institution said "When it comes to assessment, I'm rather like my students, I want to know what is going to be on the test." As opposed to reducing assessment to something narrow and formulaic, addressing faculty concerns directly and up-front has had a highly salutary effect and signals the respect for faculty time and experience required to make assessment an effective teaching-learning tool.

Workshops stress the three component parts of every plan: goals, measures, and a faculty feedback loop. We encourage faculty and departments to focus especially on areas of students' learning critical to their academic goals and that they feel they need more information about. Put this way, virtually every department has questions about its students' learning it would like answered—Can our students apply the analytic skills paradigmatic of our discipline to new texts? Do students who take the practicum have a better understanding of research in our field? Can our students convert a complex word problem to its quantitative analogue for solution?

Lists of measures are helpful to faculty along with explication of how to relate goals to measures. In addition, to the general types of information different measures provide (e.g., measures that assess performance and those that measure attitudes) we provide criteria for measures:

- there must be multiple measures of diverse types (but it is better to do several measures well than many measures poorly);
- measures should be maintainable, i.e., the department must be able to conduct the measure over time on limited resources; and
- measures should be, as much as possible, part of the fabric of instruction.

Faculty will often underestimate the difficulty of constructing or implementing a measure. The cost of such misestimation is often high as faculty will view their experience not as a single failed experiment but as the generalized failure of all assessment (we have seen a similar phenomenon in experiments with instructional technology).

The assessment staff should work actively with departments to help guide faculty to existing measures or explore efficiencies in administration or coding that make a measure feasible. Optimal use of departmental course-taking patterns, standardized projects for the major, etc., can also be encouraged in individual unit consultations. By stressing learning questions of importance to the department, the rationale for a faculty feedback loop becomes more compelling and apparent. Finally, workshops and consultations should be heavily peppered with examples from other units—unit goals, measures used, findings implemented. In this way, units in the vanguard are given deserved recognition for their pioneering efforts, there is cross-fertilization of assessment strategies, and faculty develop a sense of participating as colleagues and members of a common campus in a larger venture.

☐ Continue to Support Faculty and Units After Implementation Is Underway

One of the themes of the assessment literature is its iterative and dynamic nature. Assessment methods may prove more difficult or less informative than expected, assessment needs may change with a new curriculum or student body etc. This means units will need to rethink and perhaps reformulate their approach to assessment of student learning, and will continue to require support and assistance. Perhaps one of the most difficult tasks for staff members charged with responsibility for assessment will be remaining as responsive and sensitive to the needs of these units as they should be. If we wish assessment to truly move beyond planning into implementation, to become a regular and valued feature of the instructional routine, we must nurture unit efforts in these early days, helping all faculty and units experience the profound benefits that accrue to faculty and students through effective assessment of the learning process.

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Managing Chaos: Integrating a Comprehensive Assessment Plan

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The Western Illinois University Plan for Assessment of Student Learning delineates a cyclical process of identifying learning outcomes, measuring students' achievement of those outcomes, analyzing the results of learning assessment, and using those results as a basis for enhancing the curriculum and the teaching-learning process. Assessment is conducted in each of four areas: general education, baccalaureate level skills, undergraduate major, and graduate major. All areas seek to measure student learning at each of four stages: entry, mid-program, graduation, and alumni.

The assessment cycle at WIU is guided by a *Philosophy of Assessment of Student Learning*, which, in brief, specifies these principles.

- Diversity of purpose and programs is one of the strengths of American higher education.
- Student outcomes assessments should focus on the description of student learning as well as on the improvement of learning and performance over time.
- Methods for evaluation and assessment should be the responsibility of the faculty.
- The University and its individual programs should use multiple methods of assessment for improving learning and teaching and for demonstrating achievement.
- An effective assessment process will require resources.
- The assessment process should be linked to strategic planning and program review in order to encourage change and improvement.

General Education Assessment

Assessment of student learning in the General Education curriculum is conducted by Assessment Research Teams (ART) of faculty members appointed in each of the five categories of the University General Education: natural sciences/mathematics, social sciences, humanities, multicultural studies, and human well being. Teams are refining specific learning objectives and developing a variety of appropriate measurement techniques. Current activities of the teams are listed below.

- **Natural Sciences/Mathematics.** The Natural Sciences and Mathematics ART is extending and expanding on its work from last year which uses the SOLO taxonomy (Biggs and Collis) as a basis for measuring student thinking skills in the area of sciences and math. Committee members representing faculty from each of the sciences and the mathematics departments are producing additional assessment items (super-items) that will be administered again in their classes during Spring 1996 to determine students' levels of cognitive reasoning. The committee proposes to extend this technique throughout this entire general education category, so that results will provide for an understanding of how the curriculum can increase students' cognitive abilities.

- **Social Sciences.** The Social Science ART has revised an assessment instrument initially prepared in Spring 1994. This locally developed multiple choice test was developed by social sciences faculty to assess each of five learning objectives identified for the social sciences. It will be administered as a pre- and post-test during spring semester, 1996. They are also analyzing student responses to a set of open ended questions administered in 1994 and will compare those responses to similar data collected from the faculty, in order to examine differences in students' and faculty understanding of the goals of general education in the social sciences. In addition, they are developing a handout about the category wide learning objectives to be distributed to all faculty teaching general education social science classes.

- **Humanities.** The Humanities ART is carrying out systematized classroom assessments in eight disciplines (Art, Communication, English, Foreign languages, History, Music, Philosophy, Theatre) intended to provide evidence of the students' capacities for writing humanistic discourse. The assessments will be done at the beginning, midpoint, and conclusion of the semester. The courses range from individual sections with 35 students, to multiple sections of a single course with 35 students each, to large lecture sections of more than 60 students. Faculty members will test various classroom assessment techniques (e.g., a five-minute paper, concept maps, test question generation) and will use a common method of scoring for primary traits. Data will be analyzed by the individual faculty member to determine the relationship between the assessment and the content and pedagogy of the course. Data will also be collated from all of the sections and analyzed to determine any patterns of student performance connected to demography (e.g., ACT, number of prior humanities courses). Based on these prototype assessments, a more controlled method of classroom assessment in the humanities will be recommended to the departments and faculty at large.

- **Multicultural and Cross-cultural Studies.** The Multicultural ART members are working on three tasks. First, they are reviewing the history of the multicultural/cross cultural requirement at WIU, as well as reviewing the requirements at other universities for comparative purposes. Second, they are analyzing the data previously collected on a locally developed attitude and content test, which was administered in a pre and post format to all multicultural courses offered during Spring 1995. Finally, they are revising the instrument and will administer it to selected multicultural classes during Spring 1996. Results from both the initial and revised instruments should provide information about common content of the multicultural courses and about student attitude changes resulting from participation in a multicultural course. Because the multicultural and crosscultural category is a new development at the university, data from this ART will be used in evaluating the decision to enact this general education requirement.

- **Human Well Being.** The Human Well Being ART, consisting of faculty representing four departments offering courses in this area of general education, completed its first semester of work during Fall, 1995. ART members solicited exams from all faculty teaching general education courses in this area, selected items for an assessment instrument, and developed several open ended questions for that instrument. The instrument was then submitted to faculty for additional feedback about validity and appropriateness. The instrument will be piloted spring semester, 1996.

Baccalaureate-Level Skills

The purpose of assessment of baccalaureate-level skills is to measure student progress in achieving expectations for learning in the four areas of reading, writing, mathematics, and speaking.

- **Entrance.** ACT test scores are required for all entering students. In addition, placement tests in mathematics and writing are administered by the University Advising and Academic Support Center to all freshmen and many transfer students.

- **Mid-Program.** For the last three years, assessment of "rising-juniors" has involved administering several of the ACT developed CAAP tests, in conjunction with a long-standing, locally developed and graded writing essay. Passing the writing portion of the exams is a university graduation requirement.
- **Exit/Graduation.** Departments are charged to assess the continued progress of their majors in baccalaureate-level skills at a level determined appropriate by the departments to be of particular relevance to the success of their majors.
- **Alumni.** The Office of Institutional Research and Planning administers an extensive survey of first, fifth, and tenth year graduates on a regular cycle. In addition, each department conducts periodic alumni surveys focused more specifically on graduates' satisfaction with educational experiences in their majors.

Assessment of Learning in the Undergraduate Major

Each department or program has developed a major assessment plan for student learning. Each plan includes a version of the following components:

- a description of goals of the major;
- specific measurable learning objectives;
- assessment methods for measuring achievement of learning objectives at entry, mid-level, exit/graduation, and alumni stages;
- a description of how assessment data/results will be analyzed; and
- a description of how assessment results will be used as feedback for the improvement of learning and teaching.

The resulting department major assessment plans are diverse in terms of each of these components. Dates for beginning plan implementation range from Fall 1990 through Fall 1995. Some have collected student achievement data, and a few have closed the loop and initiated changes in curriculum and other activities in response to results obtained. The numbers of learning objectives range from 2 to 38, with some plans breaking those down further into multiple outcomes.

All departments include multiple measurement methods such as: attitudinal interviews and/or surveys; locally developed and/or standardized tests of knowledge, content and/or achievement; completion of an internship and student assessment of their experiences during it; a senior seminar; interviews with students; portfolios; enumeration of students' "real world" achievements; and state certifications. All plans also use alumni surveys and some include employer surveys and/or employer advisory councils.

Assessment of Learning in the Graduate Major

Assessment of graduate programs is currently being initiated at the university. The Graduate Council has recommended a list of components that will form the basis of graduate major assessment plans and, at present, departments are reacting to the report. The recommended components include:

- **Student Achievement**—including these elements: mission of the program, learning objectives, assessment tools, how the data will be integrated, and how the results will be used to improve program quality.
- **Feedback Loop**—which involves a description of the nature of the feedback and the procedures for program modification.
- **Faculty Involvement**—a description of how faculty will be involved in the development of the assessment plan.

- **Timeline**—an estimate of when the plan will be developed and implemented.
- **Administration**—a description of how the plan will be administered and who will be responsible for its various parts.

It is expected that departments offering graduate programs will be developing specific plans for graduate assessment this year and will begin implementation in the 1996-97 academic year.

Integrating Results for Institutional Improvement

The Provost's Office and its extension, the Office of Assessment of Student Learning with three faculty associates and the director of Institutional Research and Planning, have the delicate task of assuring that assessment activities are initiated and implemented by faculty.
A Council of Assessment of Student Learning, composed of faculty members representing all areas of the university, provides recommendations for assessment policy and procedures and works to promote and facilitate faculty responsibility in assessment.

We still face hurdles of faculty resistance, primarily by those who have not themselves been involved in any assessment activities. The challenge is for those faculty and administrators who understand and are committed to assessment as a means of continuous quality improvement to bring along their more reluctant colleagues and the students.

Activities undertaken as part of this multifaceted effort recently have included:

- publication of a periodic campus assessment newsletter;
- a day long, in-house assessment conference—highlighting presentations by faculty members involved in general education, major, and baccalaureate level skills assessment activities;
- ongoing interaction among faculty members teaching within the different general education areas concerning shared goals and measurement methods; and
- a series of meetings with various faculty committees for the purposes of increasing awareness of the university assessment process; sharing the results of assessment activities; and involving faculty in updating and revising the Western Illinois University Plan of Assessment of Student Learning.

The WIU Plan was first initiated in 1990 and was among the first to be judged acceptable by NCA reviewers (1992).

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Assessment: Moving from Planning to Implementation

Bill Wresch
Kay Schallenkamp

Introduction

In October, 1989, the North Central Association CIHE initiated a program that shook the rafters of many campuses in the region. Assessment of student academic achievement became a critical component in determining overall institutional effectiveness. As institutions rushed to address the initiative, five evaluative questions were framed to direct and focus energy. These questions were:

- To what extent has the institution demonstrated that the plan is linked to the mission, goals, and objectives of the institution for student learning and academic achievement, including learning in general education and in the major?
- What is the institution's evidence that faculty have participated in the development of the institution's plan and that the plan is institution-wide in conceptualization and scope?
- How does the plan demonstrate the likelihood that the assessment program will lead to institutional improvement when it is implemented?
- Is the timeline for the assessment program appropriate? Realistic?
- What is the evidence that the plan provides for appropriate administration of the assessment program?

At face value, the questions were straightforward and should have been easily answered. However, faculty and administrators experienced frustration and anguish as assessment of student academic achievement took center stage. Two institutions in the University of Wisconsin System—Stevens Point and Whitewater—were no different from their counterparts throughout the North Central region. As the campuses make the transition from assessment planning to implementation, each finds that the outcome has been somewhat different than the carefully crafted plans. Successes, disappointments, and a few surprises have been encountered.

UW-Stevens Point

☐ Successes

1994-95 was a banner year with approval of the assessment plan by the campus as well as NCA. The first round of department level assessments was completed with astounding results for some. Trial and error with multiple measures, portfolio development, and nationally normed tests provided opportunities for reflection and discussion among the faculty. Administration of the ACT-COMP to 150 seniors provided information regarding a breadth of general education activities.

☐ Challenges

Four departments simply refused to assess their programs. Of more concern were the three or four that went through the motions, not daring to openly defy a campus program, but clearly having no interest in legitimate participation.

☐ Surprises

The level of fear expressed by some faculty and departments was not anticipated by those who developed the plan. Serious concern that administrators would use the data for their own nefarious purposes resulted in carefully crafted safeguards that limited dissemination of reports to the assessment committee members only.

Some departments embraced the opportunity to demonstrate the strengths of their programs. Through multiple measures, they accumulated a mass of information related to student academic achievement and proudly proclaimed that their students were indeed learning what had been expected of them.

The third surprise involved administration of the ACT-COMP to seniors. Having heard horror stories about low participation, the assessment coordinator contacted nine professors teaching senior seminars. Eight of the nine agreed to administer the test as part of the course. The positive attitude of the faculty had a strong influence on student participation rates.

UW–Whitewater

☐ Successes

The Whitewater campus had its assessment plan completed in early 1993 and has been moving through various stages of implementation. Through ongoing dialog with the assessment committee, a team of faculty, staff, and administrators has been developed. Information is shared as part of annual reports submitted by departments. Committees such as the General Education Review Committee, the Audit and Review Committee, the University Curriculum Committee, and the Strategic Planning Committee require assessment results as part of the documentation submitted for curricular changes. Most faculty and administrators appear to recognize that the advantages of documenting student academic achievement far outweigh any disadvantages that had been feared.

☐ Challenges

Infusing assessment into the culture of the campus has been an ongoing challenge. Some programs have taken a minimalist stance forcing the above committees to either take a heavy handed approach to force compliance or to overlook the aberrant behavior. Deciding how to respond has caused some consternation among committee members.

☐ Surprises

Development of the plan was far easier to accomplish than implementation. The planning committee was composed of energetic individuals who were willing to perform yeoman's work to prepare the document. On the other hand, implementation of the program requires involvement of the entire campus. Those who are strongly committed often take an undue share of the burden. The committed are also constantly engaged in efforts to keep the initiative before the faculty lest they forget or assume that this is one more fad that has come and gone.

The experiences of the Stevens Point and Whitewater campuses reflect anecdotal information that has been shared during conferences and meetings throughout the NCA region. Some additional thoughts may assist individuals as they struggle to infuse assessment of student academic achievement into the daily routine of the campus culture.

Assessment: Homomensurmania or Psychosclerosis?

Traditionally, the curriculum has been determined by the faculty who use their personal educational experiences, guidelines from their professional associations, or practices from competing institutions as the basis for their decisions. Faculty decide what the curriculum should be and proceed from that point to deliver the product—information. Whether the students absorb or use the information often has been of less concern than the performance involved in delivering the information.

With the advent of assessment, the discussion is shifting from the "in loco parentis" philosophy to a student centered perspective. Questions, such as what outcomes do we expect of students?, how do we know these are important? how will we know whether the students have met the expected outcomes?, and if they haven't what are we going to change?, have replaced "students don't know what they need to learn" and grade distributions as a topic of department meetings.

For some disciplines and some faculty, the discussions are relatively easy. For others, the discussions are more painful. Concern that the curriculum is driven by employers, students, or other stakeholders is a troubling issue for some. Such perceived intrusion into the inner sanctum of faculty responsibilities raises questions related to autonomy and academic freedom. Will assessment jeopardize these dearly held tenets of higher education?

In the face of Homomensurmania (the irresistible urge to measure human behavior) is the resistance posed by Psychosclerosis (the hardening of attitudes). Assessment coordinators and administrators are finding that their role is mentor and peace keeper. The stages of change must allow normal human behaviors to occur. One should expect anger, denial, rejection, and grief. But, these eventually should lead to understanding and acceptance.

As educators, we face changes that challenge our normal operating procedures—from closed classrooms to open classrooms on the Internet, from theory dominant courses to theory supported by field practice, from lecture delivery to group discovery, from monocultural to multicultural, from teacher focused to student/learning focused. Policy makers are asking whether students learn because of our efforts or in spite of them. By ensuring that we know what we expect students to learn and are prepared to demonstrate that our students accomplish the expected outcomes, we have an avenue to match curricular change with the outcomes. If students do not accomplish what has been expected, we should be able to identify why this has occurred and make appropriate adjustments. Those faculty and administrators with homomensurmanic tendencies must be mentored. It is not necessary or wise to amass volumes of data. A carefully crafted plan should ensure that sufficient data are available. Those faculty and administrators who lean toward psychosclerosis must also be mentored. Assessment of student outcomes provides an opportunity to embrace change and shape our destiny. It is an opportunity that we should not overlook.

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Chapter VI

Assessing Student Learning: Relating Assessment of Student Academic Achievement to Institutional Effectiveness

Let This College Fly! Institutional Effectiveness and Continuous Improvement

Judy Armstrong

Introduction

> *Quality, like beauty, is in the eye of the beholder, and in higher education, the eye of the beholder is beginning to squint.*
>
> —Smith and Baxter

Since World War II, when many of them first appeared, America's community colleges have enjoyed a blissful marriage with their publics. Offering accessible, home-based, and low-cost education, their numbers increased dramatically, as did their enrollments. By 1985, the country's 1,350 two-year colleges represented more than 40 percent of institutions of higher education and accounted for 44 percent of all first-time college freshmen (Parilla, 1993, p. 22). Today, a changing society and dwindling resources are bringing the honeymoon to a close. In their search for a quality education at rock-bottom prices, people are "...bringing the same consumer expectations to a college as they do to a supermarket, a bank, or a hardware store" (Reid, 1995, p.22).

In times of severe criticism about the quality of America's higher education system, coupled with stiff competition for public dollars, it is understandable that more and more demands are being voiced for accountability. Certainly the nation's accrediting agencies, which have placed stronger emphasis on the assessment of student academic outcomes and institutional effectiveness as criteria for accreditation, are motivating colleges to respond to those demands. A more significant motivation, however, may come from state and national legislators, who themselves are being held more accountable for distributing public funds wisely and well. When faced with difficult choices—education or health, health or safety—they are increasingly more likely to respond as the parishioners in this story recounted by Ashworth (1994).

Preacher:	Lord, we gotta make this church *walk*.
Parishioners:	Amen, let'er walk.
Preacher:	Lord, we gotta make this church *run*.
Parishioners:	Amen, let'er run.
Preacher:	Lord, we gotta make this church *fly*.
Parishioners:	Amen, let'er fly.
Preacher:	Now, Lord, it's gonna take some money to make this church fly.
Parishioners:	Amen, Lord, let this church *walk*. (p. 10)

A third, less often encountered, motivation stems from people within a college doing what leaders in any organization should be doing—asking questions of purpose and performance (Bogue and Saunders, 1992, p. xi). Asking those questions, however, is no easy task, for it often leads to more questions and seldom leads to definitive answers. Perhaps that is the real role of accountability in higher education—asking the questions that guide the continuous search for improvement.

Since student success is the primary reason for any college's existence, one of the most significant pieces of measuring institutional effectiveness is the process for gathering, measuring, and evaluating student outcomes. However, effectiveness, including student success and the continued survival of the institution itself, depends upon an organization's ability to effectively manage change. According to Lorenzo and LeCroy, continuous change will be the cornerstone of the Information Age, and the community college that is able to respond to change "must demonstrate a similar capacity to grow. It must develop the processes that will enable it continually to update and strengthen itself to conform to new conditions" (1994, p. 21). Thus, the effective community college utilizes assessment, systems thinking, quality initiatives, and leadership development to produce "...successful outcomes for multiple constituencies—internal and external. When outcomes are compared to the institution's mission and goals, the result is a composite picture of an institution's effectiveness" (Community College Roundtable, 1994, p. 9). Therefore, colleges that realistically and regularly measure their effectiveness, analyze the results, and develop strategies to improve those results will be better able to adapt themselves to the future's uncertain environment.

One of the major goals of any accountability effort is to identify concerns early enough to counter their possible negative effects. However, crises often arise because organizations are not willing to look at early warning signs of difficulty. Instead of aggressively and continually searching for problems, many leaders wait to be hit by them; thus, their organizations are in a constant reactive, rather than proactive, mode. According to Peters, "Effective assessment requires a diligent search for bad news, which is more useful than good, but accountability encourages the opposite. Campus officials are understandably reluctant to bear bad tidings to those who fund them..." (1994, p. 18). As a result, public demands for accountability often are answered by accountability reports that leave too many truths hidden. Improvement remains illusive.

In theory, a plan to measure institutional effectiveness should provide an ideal avenue for an aggressive and continual search for problems—although it may not assure that anyone within the institution has actually taken the risky walk down that avenue looking for those problems. Before an organization can really begin that walk, however, it must be certain that the avenue leads to the desired destination and that all of its employees have the map. The question remains, then, do plans to measure institutional effectiveness truly lead to continuous improvement? Whether a college and its students *fly* or *walk* depends upon the answer to that question.

Issues

Quality is never a problem, but the solution to problems.—W. Edwards Deming

If effective institutions produce success for both internal and external constituencies, then a plan to measure effectiveness at a community college should address the outcomes of students, employees, and the community it serves. While assessment of student outcomes is the primary measure of a community college's effectiveness, recent research increasingly points to college leadership style as an almost equally important measure because of its ability to significantly affect stakeholder satisfaction.

☐ Assessment and Institutional Effectiveness

Without a doubt, most efforts to assess institutional effectiveness have come in response to the nation's accrediting bodies' requirement that colleges document student academic achievement as part of the self-study for accreditation and their further expectation that the results of assessment be used for institutional improvement. Accreditation agencies have defined institutional effectiveness as "a process designed to hold public educational organizations accountable for clear mission statements, expectations of student learning, and appropriate assessment processes to determine the extent to which these expectations are being met" (Baker, 1994, p. 2). For instance, four of the NCA's Criteria for Accreditation are stated in terms of an institution's ability to clearly state and accomplish its mission and purposes. It is critical, then, that plans to measure institutional effectiveness be linked to a college's mission and goals. Clearly, the goal of institutional effectiveness is improvement.

However, accreditation is a voluntary process, and the value of self-study perceived by some as dubious at best. Public scrutiny of the quality of higher education versus its escalating cost is on the increase.

According to Banta (1995), "...the accountability noose is tightening," and colleges are searching for "...indicators of performance that have credibility within and outside the academy" (p. 4). In that framework, Banta goes on to define assessment as "...a process of providing credible evidence of the outcomes of higher education that is undertaken for the purpose of improving programs and services within the institution" (p. 5).

Therefore, institutional effectiveness measures how well a college is able to produce desired outcomes with the different publics it serves (Baker, 1994). Assessment of those outcomes should be systematic, ongoing, accessible, and easy to use. Because the goal of assessment is to identify problems, organizations that measure their effectiveness may find themselves in conflict. However, if the assessment leads to continuous improvement, the benefits to the college—and the publics it serves—will far outweigh the turmoil.

☐ Stakeholder Satisfaction

An institution's management system is an essential ingredient for quality. Leadership is a group phenomenon, yet many community college leaders today have been reared in yesterday's "bureaucratic organizational structures that were hierarchical, top-down, and control-oriented...this approach to management will not suit colleges in the quality-focused, customer-centered environment of the 1990's" (Alfred and Carter, 1993, p. 12). Instead, leaders for the next decade will need to be as transformative as the institutions they are working to transform. According to Alfred and Carter (1993), personal visions are being replaced by "shared visions":

> What college can afford to neglect the opinion of employees and other interest groups in decisions about educational programs? Our colleges are being asked to establish linkages and collaborations with a variety of partners; this extended form of operation is apt to become more important in the future. (p. 15)

If leadership is a group process and vision is shared, who should be involved in the collaboration?

☐ Community

For two-year colleges, which are partially funded by their service areas, one of the partners must be the local community. Certainly, community service and involvement are at the core of the community college mission and purpose. The Institute for Future Studies (1991) suggests that public opinion affects organizational success. Since perception equates to reality in the public's mind, it is important for a community college to "...make the reality the perception" (p. 18).

Lorenzo (1993) agrees that, with the advent of better competition and lower consumer loyalty, public opinion is having an increasing impact on institutional success. "More frequently than ever before, community colleges are being judged in the court of public opinion. . . Without an effective means to monitor and shape public sentiment, our colleges can find themselves working contrary to the wishes of this ultimate court. Nothing can succeed for long without the sanction of public opinion, especially in the public sector" (p. 51).

☐ Students

According to Bogue and Saunders (1992), "The quality of a college or university is quite simply found in the quality of its caring for students" (p. 218). Although faculty are the primary source of student perceptions about the quality of the colleges they attend, other sources have a significant impact on those perceptions (Astin, 1993). The quality of advising services, interactions with offices offering support services, and campus facilities—all play a role in a student's decision to attend and/or return to a college. When asked, students often cite these areas, as well as the institutional "spirit of service," as needing improvement (Bogue and Saunders, 1992, p. 219). Colleges that want to improve services can easily discover which processes to target by asking students.

Furthermore, community college students are as nontraditional as the colleges they attend. Their goals at matriculation may not be measurable through traditional outcome efforts or by key indicators of performance. Many community college students "...seek only a few courses now and then to satisfy their personal interests or to learn the skills they need for job entry or promotion" (Cohen and Brawer, 1989, p. 57). Thus, gathering data on student satisfaction with specific courses and institutional support services can help colleges to determine their value for students with short-term goals.

☐ Employees

If, indeed, students are influenced by a college's "quality of caring," it makes sense for an organization to identify the satisfaction levels of faculty and staff. According to Lorenzo (1993):

> Faculty and staff attitudes must be monitored systematically and objectively. Institutional climate is an aggregate of employee attitudes, and it can be assessed by measuring factors such as communication, satisfaction, cooperation, decision making, trust, leadership, and collaboration. By acting on the findings of such assessments and monitoring improvements, community college leaders can foster higher levels of employee commitment and enthusiasm, which is central to improving institutional performance. (p. 53)

To make a difference, colleges must encourage "...staff actions that create value, such as improving instruction, delivering better services, developing collaborative ventures, and lowering costs" (Alfred and Carter, 1993, p. 11). Therefore, in addition to student academic and vocational outcomes, measures of institutional effectiveness should include ways to monitor community, student, and employee satisfaction. By creating a climate of trust and ownership for its external and internal constituents, a college can discover the gaps in its accountability to those groups and work towards improvement.

☐ Continuous Improvement

As suggested by the catchphrase, "Total Quality Management," much of the literature surrounding quality initiatives focuses on management, specifically the need for a change in leadership style equal to the change in society. In fact, Cohen, Brawer, and Associates (1994) argue that leadership that moves the college toward collaborative efforts has a positive effect on student outcomes: "In community colleges with higher-quality learning environments, administrators create and defend cultures where faculty input is sought out, valued, and used. Priorities are clearly defined, and the focus is on teaching and learning" (p. 49).

However, some community colleges have become complacent—victims of their own success. Having been able to reap the rewards of phenomenal growth with little effort, many community colleges have abandoned the innovation and creativity from which they sprang. Like fat cats devouring goldfish from a tank, they have ignored the possibility that the tank might someday be empty. "The result is a college success story for external consumption that may not accurately reflect internal staff perceptions of college performance. Over time, administrators come to accept cosmetic indicators of performance (for example, growth, visibility, and public recognition) as truth" (Alfred and Carter, 1993, p. 10).

Cohen and Brawer (1982) concur that community colleges' success has hampered their ability to adapt. "Small wonder that the college leaders made growth their touchstone. It is a position of convenience that is easier than change" (p. 12). However, improvement *is* change and change leads to disruption. Lorenzo and LeCroy (1994) assert that "fundamental change, change which influences the very core of institutional life, is needed in order to respond effectively to the Information Age" (p. 2).

Therefore, a community college seeking continuous improvement will undoubtedly face change. With change, even change for improvement, comes conflict. According to Schmuck and Runkel (1985), conflicts are "...natural unavoidable occurrences that cannot be expected to vanish of their own accord. Instead, they should be brought out into the open and managed by means of channels or occasions through which adversaries can introduce their conflicting claims into the business of the school" (p. 297). Thus, if community colleges are not prepared to look for and manage conflicts, they will not be able to manage change. If they are unable or unwilling to manage change, they will not be able to improve.

Conclusion

Quality is not an act. It is a habit. —Aristotle

Any plan for institutional improvement should be a constantly evolving process. As goals are reached or exceeded, the desired outcomes should be elevated and/or modified; new goals established; and ones that are no longer valid, discarded (Campion, 1995, p. 1). The same holds true for the process itself. However, the true essence of quality lies in caring.

The promise of quality resides, then, in the plain of our passions. Do we care enough for truth, do we care enough for service, and do we care enough for human growth and dignity that our vision of quality permeates and penetrates the entire campus and touches the mind and the heart of every person who serves there? . . . The promise can only be realized in a community of caring, which ought to be an accurate descriptor of a quality college or university. (Bogue and Saunders, 1994, p. 280)

If community colleges pursue their quest for quality by aggressively searching for problems and not settling into the comfort zone of complacency, then they and their students will—*fly*.

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Creating the Link Between Institutional Effectiveness and Assessment

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Sinclair Community College's process of self-examination has been motivated by one central goal: to improve student learning and the processes contributing to effective and efficient learning. The issue of assessment and student learning is not one that can be studied and settled during the short term, thus ongoing discussions and decision making have occurred since the mid 1980's, with strong grass-roots faculty involvement. A college-wide Assessment Steering Committee was formed in 1988, chaired by a full-time faculty member, and charged with reviewing the status of assessment practices at Sinclair and making appropriate recommendations related to assessing student academic achievement.

During the first year the Assessment Steering Committee was established (1988), a definition for assessment was formulated, and twelve principles of assessment were adopted. These principles guided the development of all subsequent assessment initiatives. The Assessment Steering Committee spent its second year designing three assessment policies that focused on student learning and were subsequently adopted by the Sinclair Board of Trustees. These three policies formed the cornerstone of all subsequent assessment initiatives. The policies clearly defined involvement for students, faculty, and academic departments, and required the cooperation of many areas across the campus including Instruction, Student Services, and Institutional Planning & Research. The three policies are:

1. mandatory assessment of degree and certificate seeking students' entry level basic skills in reading, writing and math and subsequent placement;
2. mandatory summative assessment of degree and certificate seeking students' skills in their major; and
3. mandatory assessment of degree and certificate seeking students' general education skills.

These three policies led to a fourth policy, adopted in 1992, which "guarantees" career graduates' performance as well as transfer credits.

Another major phase of the evolution of assessment at Sinclair was the design of a long-term plan for the assessment of student academic achievement. A Sinclair Assessment Model was developed and is based on the four-phase Shewhart Cycle (Plan-Do-Study-Act of continuous quality improvement. The PDSA Model provides a mechanism for measuring the extent of implementation of Sinclair's broad-based assessment program and critical success factors and identifies areas needing improvement as well as strengths. The PDSA Model is used to ensure that assessment results are used to make improvements. The model provided the framework for Sinclair's Institutional Effectiveness Model. The Assessment Steering Committee reviews the PDSA Assessment Model each year to assess the assessment plan.

Sinclair's fifteen year history of assessment initiatives provided a strong foundation for the institution in developing an institutional effectiveness model. Recognizing that the PDSA process is as central to institutional effectiveness as it is to the measurement of student academic achievement, Sinclair began to link its assessment process to the development of a model for institutional effectiveness.

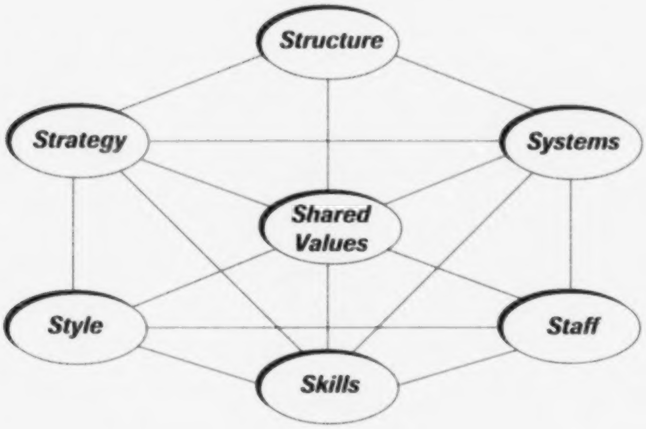
The National Alliance of Community and Technical Colleges (NACTC) defines institutional effectiveness as the process of articulating the mission of the college, setting goals emanating from that mission, defining how the college and the community will know when goals are being met, and using the data from assessment in an ongoing cycle of goal-setting and planning (PDSA). Putting it another way, effectiveness suggests that a college has a discernible mission, is producing outcomes that meet constituency needs, and can conclusively document the outcomes it is producing as a reflection of its mission (AACC Special Report No. 4). NACTC points out that each institution is unique and should devise a system for assessing effectiveness that makes sense to its particular mission and in its own context, using the following three guidelines:

- The system should be comprehensive in focus and include inquiry into the institution's effectiveness with regard to the acquisition and deployment of human, fiscal, and physical resources, the adequacy of the processes the institution has in place to support goal attainment, and the outcomes the institution achieves.
- The elements of the system should be derived from the institution's unique mission and goals and the needs of its community.
- An assessment of student attainment of program outcomes (in both general education and the area of specialization) should be an element of any such system.

Using these guidelines as well as the Assessment (PDSA) Continuous Improvement Model, Sinclair Community College has focused on developing an institutional effectiveness model (see page 6) during the past two years. To that end a number of major goals have either been reached or are currently in progress, including:

- creating a vision that defines what "Sinclair Quality" will be in the future;
- reviewing the environment and determining how to work collaboratively to attain the vision;
- aligning departmental mission models with the overall college mission;
- engaging all campus personnel in examining core indicators of success and defining critical success factors;
- providing training for all college employees in Total Quality Management tools, such as benchmarking, project teams, and measurement as was accomplished through various assessment initiatives.
- initiating pilot projects and a support system to identify and address cross-functional, cross-institutional issues.

Figure 1. The 7-S Model



In January of 1993, the President of Sinclair appointed a Sinclair Quality Council, chaired by the Provost and having broad representation from all campus constituencies. The Sinclair Quality Council adopted a unique 7-S model[1] which was used to learn more about Sinclair prior to the development of a vision statement. As a result of the 7-S process, the Sinclair Quality Council developed and drafted a Vision Statement for the College. Focus group sessions were conducted providing the opportunity for input from all college employees. The Sinclair Board of Trustees adopted the Vision Statement in March of 1994.

Components of the 7-S Model (see Figure 2) also played an important role in the collegewide effort to develop mission models for divisions and departments, which began in the summer of 1994. A mission model is a facilitation-based tool that allows the staff of a department, to portray, in a single image, the relationship of individual activities/tasks carried out in the department to the central mission of the college. For Sinclair "learning" is the central mission; therefore, regardless of the department, learning is the focus of each college operation.

Figure 2. The 7-S Model

Structure Is NOT Organization...The 7-S Model

Productive organization change is not simply a matter of structure, although structure is important. It is not so simple as the interaction between strategy and structure, although strategy is critical too. Effective organization change is really the relationship between structure, strategy, systems, style, skills, and staff, and something called shared values.

Structure:	Structure refers to what the organization "looks" like with respect to executing the strategy.
Strategy:	Strategy consists of those actions that an organization plans and executes in response to realizing or anticipating changes in the external environment-its customers, its competitors .
Systems:	Systems are the procedures, formal and informal, that make the organization go, day by day, year by year, or, in other words, how work gets done.
Style:	An organization's style is a reflection of its culture(s) and a vehicle through which philosophy is realized.
Staff:	Staff describes the process through which the College recruits, hires, trains, and develops its employees.
Skills:	Skills are the dominating attributes, or capabilities, within an organization.
Shared Values:	Shared values are the guiding concepts–a set of values and aspirations, often unwritten, that go beyond the conventional formal statement of Sinclair's objectives.

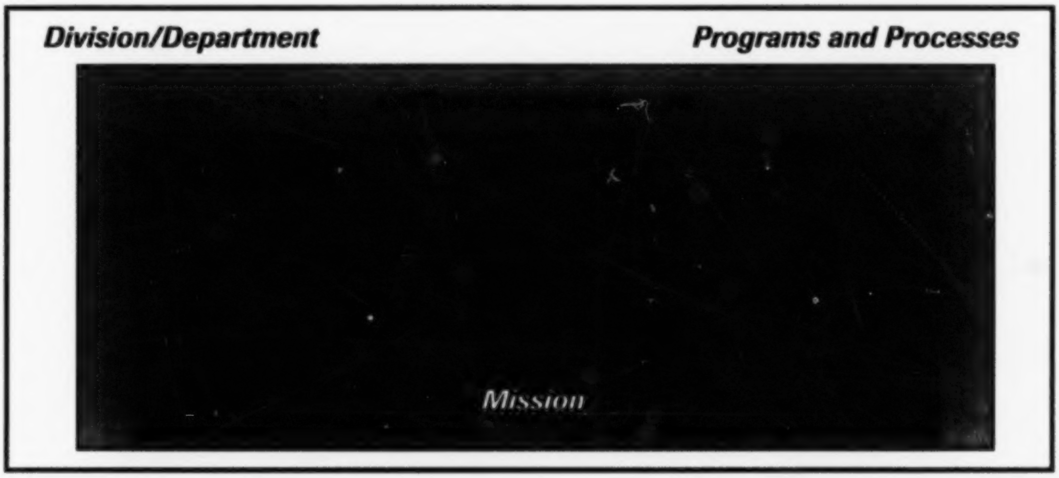
As a result of the mission modeling experience, core indicators of success were developed. Input included information derived from focus group sessions with reviews by department and division personnel of their mission models to determine how success would be measured. Six core indicators and definitions were identified and align closely with Sinclair's mission. They are:

- **Access to Success.** Sinclair assists its students to achieve their educational goals through overcoming barriers that preclude or limit participation in meaningful learning opportunities.
- **Lifelong Learning.** Sinclair provides learning opportunities which promote personal and professional growth throughout a lifetime.

- **Student Development.** Sinclair enhances the learning process through services and programs intended to support the development of the whole person.
- **Community Focus.** Sinclair is a catalyst for regional cooperation and leadership, which improves the quality of life in the Miami Valley.
- **Quality Workplace.** Sinclair nurtures and supports a workforce and an organizational structure dedicated to the continuous improvement of the opportunities the college provides for its students .
- **Stewardship.** Institutional effectiveness at Sinclair is ensured by a commitment to the prudent use of resources through continuous improvement in efficiency and effectiveness in all aspects of the college's operations.

Figure 3.

This diagram illustrates Sinclair's process of aligning the College's Mission Statement with Core Indicators of Success, which subsequently led to identification of Critical Success Factors. The result will be division/department measures of performance regarding Critical Success Factors, thus providing a substantiated rationale for instituting meaningful, quantifiable change.



Under development are Critical Success Factors (CSF's) which are actions and/or outcomes at the college, division, and department level that represent how the Mission is accomplished through each of the Core Indicators. For example, student academic achievement is one of the Critical Success Factors of the Core Indicator, Stewardship. The goal is for CSF's to be measurable and to represent ways of assessing the extent to which each unit (college, division, department) is supporting each Core Indicator. A meaningful Critical Success Factor is one that is absolutely essential to the accomplishment of the unit's own Mission Model, practical to measure/document, and provides information useful for continuous improvement of the unit's performance. However, CSF's may vary for each Core Indicator, and actual CSF's are likely to vary with each unit at each operational level.

This session will focus on the process used by Sinclair Community College in creating the link between assessment and institutional effectiveness through defining it's vision and mission, identifying core indicators of success, and developing mission models for the various Divisions of the College.

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Footnotes

1. Waterman, Robert H., Jr., Thomas J. Peters, and Julien R. "Structure Is Not Organization." *Business Horizons* (June, 1980): 14-26.

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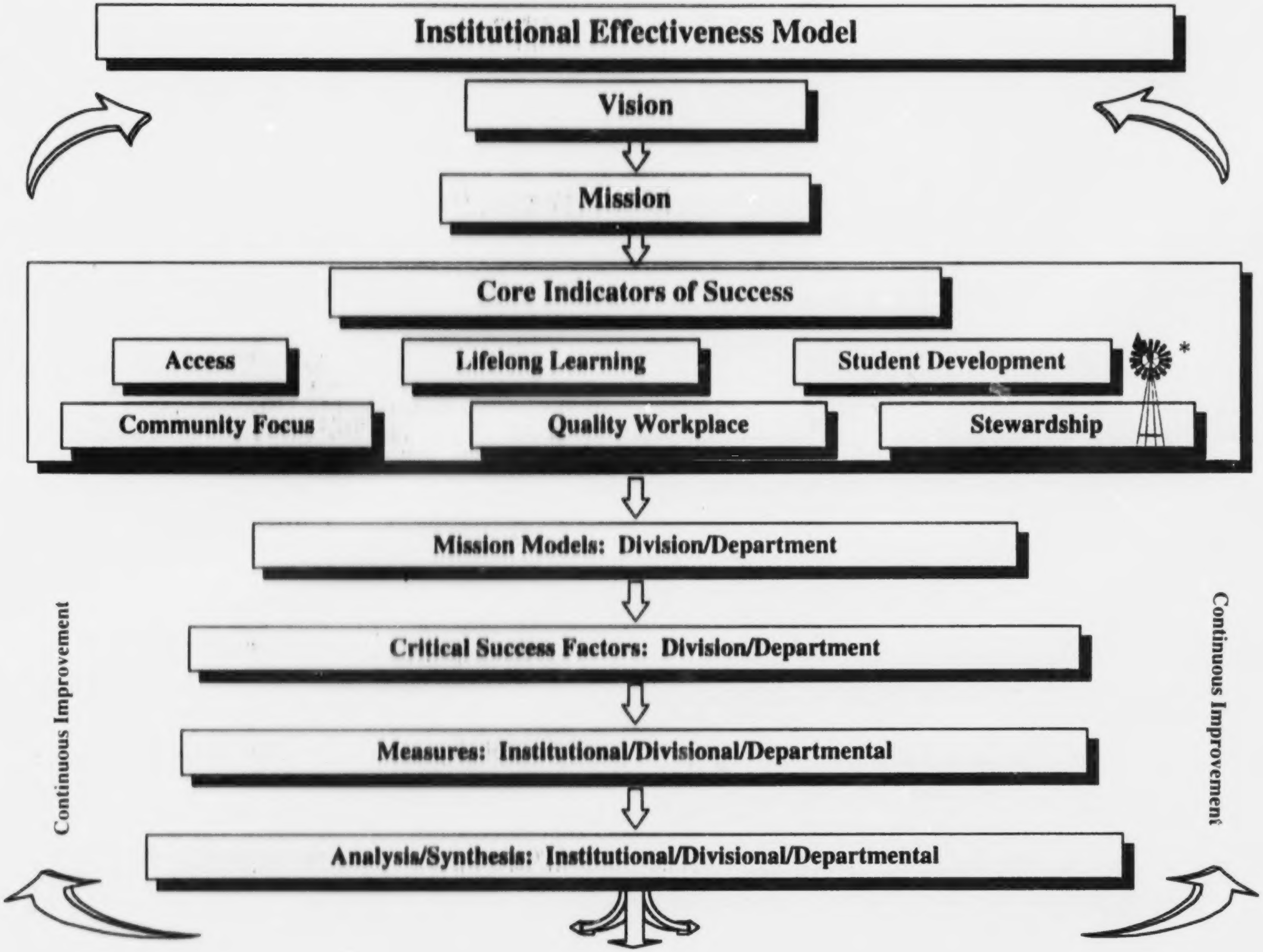
Appendix A. PDSA Assessment Model (Student Academic Achievement)


Institutional Effectiveness Model
Vision
Mission
Core Indicators of Success
Access
Lifelong Learning
Student Development
*
Community Focus
Quality Workplace
Stewardship
Mission Models: Division/Department
Critical Success Factors: Division/Department
Measures: Institutional/Divisional/Departmental
Analysis/Synthesis: Institutional/Divisional/Departmental
Continuous Improvement
Continuous Improvement

Chapter VII

Assessing Student Learning: Tools of Assessment

Creating Hope Out of Hype: The Potential for Integrating Technology with Assessment

Jeffrey R. Highland
Larry Luttmers
William T. Mangan
David P. Sokolowski

Recent conversations about the role of technology in higher education have served up a tantalizing view of the future. New methods of instruction, on-line libraries, and distance education delivery strategies are only a few of the anticipated and realized applications of emerging computer and communication technologies to higher education. But with the exception of those in special education, participants in the assessment movement have overlooked the potential for integrating these emerging technologies with the assessment of student learning. Why has this been the case? Is there a role for emerging technologies in improving the assessment of student achievement?

We believe that there are four primary reasons why technology has not been viewed as a way to enhance the assessment of student learning:

- **The recognition that assessment is possible without technology.** Assessment is not an issue of technical capabilities; an appraisal of student learning can never be generated by a computer application. Only faculty can validly determine whether or not the goals for student academic achievement have been accomplished. This reality, coupled with the fact that many institutions have now had several years to implement various assessment strategies, raises new issues for the assessment of learning. The question facing institutions is no longer, "How can we assess student academic achievement?" but rather "How can we utilize the data we have collected to improve our institutions?" To be useful for assessment, emerging technologies must help answer this last question, thereby helping "close the feedback loop" of assessment.

- **The affirmation that academic freedom and privacy must never be casualties of new technologies.** Many people are suspicious about the capacity of emerging technologies to monitor personal and intellectual activities. The use of new technological systems must be as low-risk and secure as possible to encourage faculty use. Emerging technologies cannot run counter to long-held values of academic freedom and privacy. If they do, then those new tools will not be embraced by the people they were designed to serve.

- **The realization that the cost of emerging technologies will determine which tools become utilized.** New technologies almost invariably come with an intimidating price tag. Institutions may be able to recoup most of these costs in the long run through greater efficiencies, higher morale, and so on. But colleges and universities must be honest about the true costs of adopting new technologies. Institutions that do not adequately fund the infrastructure for their adopted technologies will face an institutional nightmare, one where future attempts to use new tools will be greeted with the cynicism such efforts deserve.

- **The misunderstanding that technology cannot deal with the most complex forms of learning and assessment.** Some faculty believe that there are disciplines and student outcomes that are so unique or complicated that technology cannot possibly capture their complexity. Questions centering on disciplinary and outcome issues arise, such as, "How can one assess the ability of students to communicate using technology?" or "How can faculty use technology to assess the ability of students to work collaboratively?" Assessment methods precipitate their own questions, such as, "How can technology deal with more authentic forms of assessment?" But emerging tools are starting to answer these types of questions, and it is only a matter of time before faculty will have a wide range of technological options for addressing distinctive curricular needs.

When combining these four reasons with the strong reactions that assessment engenders on campuses, it is no wonder that applications that link emerging technologies with assessment have been slow to evolve. But we at Saint Mary's University of Minnesota, through the Liberal Education Assessment Project (LEAP) and in partnership with Buzzeo, Inc., are developing an application that combines emerging technologies with the assessment of student learning. The application, an electronic portfolio of student works, is a computer-based, networked collection of student artifacts that is merged with traditional student data bases on campuses. We believe that the application presents many benefits to our university for improving assessment and enhancing learning. But the process by which we have designed the system has provided us surprising insights. We believe that the process of integrating emerging technologies with assessment fosters three distinctive benefits to an institution:

- **The concept of "access to information" is defined.** The fundamental question here is "What information will be accessible, and who can access that information?" With so many new data sources becoming available to faculty and administrators, protocols must be established that explicitly define what information is "fair game." In creating the electronic portfolio system, Saint Mary's University had to articulate for the first time in its history that information is not a commodity to be hoarded but a foundation for common dialogue.
- **Collaboration among faculty, students, and staff is enhanced.** The creation of Saint Mary's electronic student portfolio system has ushered a new dynamic into the university's environment. Faculty and administrators from a variety of specialties and educational philosophies have worked well to develop the system. Campus-wide conversations that have come out of this collaboration have centered on the learning process and the roles each of us plays. Articulating our technological needs forced us to answer some fundamental questions about how we are advancing the mission of the university.
- **Institutional responsibility for academic quality is differentiated.** Prior to the creation of the electronic portfolio, the notions of "quality" and "responsibility" seemed ambiguous. Part of the reason for this is that it is difficult to grasp how one's efforts contribute to the entire academic enterprise of the university. But new technologies can make information more accessible to more people than older methods of data storing and retrieval. In this way, each member of the university can become an institutional researcher, and campus dialogue becomes less reliant on anecdote and more dependent on valid data that includes authentic, multiple, and longitudinal measures. For the first time, we see how our own work furthers the mission of the institution.

The potential for integrating emerging technologies with assessment is intriguing, but an enlightened sensitivity to the realities of the academy and the truths of technology is essential. Irrespective of the assessment approaches used, data for decision-making must be accessible and meaningful. To this end, emerging technologies can provide powerful tools for strengthening effectiveness and quality. But colleges and universities must select and integrate such tools in a careful and deliberate fashion. If institutions dive into new technologies imprudently, they may find themselves stuck with expensive gadgets that are little more than unwanted novelties.

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Generating More Light than Heat: A Departmental Approach to Performance Assessment

Jay Rasmussen
Larry Goodrich
Don Meyer

The Education Department at North Central Bible College is committed to the idea that quality student assessment generates more light than heat, that light (understanding) being for the student, the instructor, and those making curricular decisions within the college. The Education Department search for quality assessment methods began in the fall of 1994. The impetus for the search was twofold. First, we felt that traditional assessment methods (multiple choice, short answer, true-false, and matching items) were not capable of adequately measuring the type of learning we considered crucial for the effective functioning of teachers in a rapidly changing world. Second, the Minnesota State Department of Education issued a ruling that each teacher education institution within the state must have an assessment plan in place by 1996.

Within this paper, the following issues will be addressed: the context in which performance assessment was introduced; writing of learner outcomes; defining performance assessment; writing the actual performance assessments; and finally, preliminary thoughts about the overall effectiveness of the assessment plan.

Institutional and Departmental Overview

North Central Bible College (NCBC) is a coeducational, undergraduate institution with a strong liberal arts core. NCBC is a primarily residential college located in downtown Minneapolis, Minnesota, with an enrollment of 1041 students. NCBC is owned and operated by 11 Assemblies of God districts in the upper midwest. NCBC offers B.A. and B.S. degrees in 22 different majors as well as several diploma, certificate, and associate programs. Seventy-five percent of the NCBC's graduates are presently in church vocational positions in the United States and around the world. The Teacher Licensure Program, as developed by the Education Department, was approved by the Minnesota State Board of Teaching in 1987. Ninety-seven students are currently classified as elementary education majors. Those students are preparing for (K-6) teaching positions in Christian, public and private schools. The department chair, and four full-time, one half-time, and two part-time faculty prepare students within the major.

Laying the Groundwork (Writing Learner Outcomes)

Before any assessment design work was initiated, the department focused on defining the essential knowledge, skills, and dispositions of beginning elementary teachers. This one-year initiative was led by the department chair with ongoing feedback from the department faculty and an External Affairs Committee comprised of educators from within and outside the college. A total of 52 specific learner outcomes were agreed upon by all constituents in the process. The nine general instructional outcomes were:

- Demonstrates a strong foundation in general/liberal studies content knowledge.
- Demonstrates a knowledge of the historical, philosophical, and sociological foundations of education along with its political aspects.

- Demonstrates a working knowledge of the dynamics and principles of human growth and development.
- Applies the research based theories and practice that validate teaching-learning strategies, curriculum development, and other educational practices.
- Demonstrates appropriate leadership within the classroom and/or school setting that models respect for individual differences.
- Analyzes issues concerning education and the professional educator.
- Formulates classroom management strategies that aid in the development of self-esteem and self-control by the student.
- Formulates a world view based on Christian principles, inclusive of knowledge, skills, and dispositions; and then translates it into appropriate and effective teaching behaviors.
- Demonstrates a value system supportive of others.

Laying More Groundwork (Defining Performance Assessment)

Once the learner outcomes were established, the search for quality methods of assessment began. A faculty member from within the department was given one-fourth release time to investigate assessment options, create or adapt an appropriate assessment model, provide in-service education for departmental colleagues, and provide feedback on the design of actual assessments. This individual was known as the Performance Assessment Facilitator.

During the initial investigation of assessment methods, four forms of assessment appeared as options for evaluating student success in meeting the established learner outcomes—traditional assessment, performance assessment, authentic assessment, and alternative assessment. The first option, traditional assessment, was dismissed by the Department of Education faculty because of concerns about the limited value of this method in assessing the established outcomes. Coming to conceptual clarity about the meaning of the three other assessment methods (performance assessment, authentic assessment, and alternative assessment) was not an easy task. While there is limited consensus regarding these terms, Meyer (1992) and Worthen (1993) offered valuable insights from which the following definitions were constructed.

- **Performance assessment** focuses on students' processes, products, or performances as they engage in specific behaviors on significant tasks. That behavior is then assessed according to a set of predetermined criteria. The context may or may not be a real-life context.
- **Authentic assessment** focuses on students' processes, products, or performances as they engage in specific behaviors on significant tasks. That behavior is then assessed according to a set of predetermined criteria. The context is similar to that encountered in real-life. Note: Authenticity is considered multidimensional. Facets of authenticity include: stimuli, task complexity, locus of control, motivation, spontaneity, resources, conditions, criteria, standards, and consequences. Some assessments are more authentic than others. Educators must be explicit about which facets of authenticity are the most critical.
- **Alternative assessment** includes either performance or authentic assessment.

The performance assessment option was selected by the Department of Education as the model that would best assess our particular set of learner outcomes. Additional rationale for this selection included the following: (a) a belief that not everything the department does will or should be completely authentic (although the continual focus will be on authenticity), (b) in terms of feasibility of the task, the department did not wish to incur the extra work of specifying how each assessment was authentic or inauthentic, and (c) performance assessment seems to be the most commonly used and best understood of the three terms.

Once the performance assessment option was agreed upon, the next task was to develop an assessment design model that would serve as a base of understanding for all of the department members. The text, *Student*

Assessment Design Outline

Outcome:

Purpose: To provide direction for instruction, provide guidelines for assessment, and to convey instructional intent to others.

Writing Guidelines:

- states in terms of what is expected from the learner
- states in terms that are observable
- measures only one intended outcome

Performance Criteria (observable indicators of success):

Purpose: To refine faculty expectations of student performance, develop student understanding of required performance, and to establish a shared basis of understanding for judgment purposes.

Writing Guidelines:

- relates directly to the distinguishing essentials of a given instructional outcome
- states in observable terms
- allows for student creativity in meeting criteria
- utilizes an appropriate degree of specificity (greater specificity is used when students are at a lower developmental level)
- supports quality self-assessment by the student
- supports quality assessment by the instructor and other judges

Performance Process (what students will do):

Purpose: Requiring new information to be utilized deeply and elaborately will dramatically increases chances of successful encoding and retrieval of information from long-term memory.

Writing Guidelines:

- provides an opportunity to realize *all* generic criteria related to a given outcome
- provides an opportunity to develop specific criteria related to a given outcome
- recognizes the developmental level of the learner
- utilizes the most realistic purpose and audience possible
- includes enough information for the learner to understand the context and complete the process without further information being provided by the instructor

Performance Judgment (how the process will be judged and by whom):

Purpose: Performance Judgment serves as the basis from which Performance Feedback is provided. Performance Judgment involves the *creation* of a meaningful profile of how well the learner has met the generic and specific criteria outlined in the Performance Criteria.

Writing Guidelines:

- defines *who* will make the judgment
- defines *how* the judgment will be made
- utilizes Performance Criteria in the valuing process
- focuses on strengths and weaknesses but is generally positive in nature
- provides an inside (self-assessment) and outside perspective
- specifies explicit steps for improvement
- provides timely information that is reinforcing as well as developmental in nature

Performance Feedback (how feedback will be provided):

Purpose: Performance Feedback is a component of the overall assessment process which focus on reflection and growth. Performance Feedback involves the *communication* of the meaningful profile developed in the Performance Judgment. The Performance Feedback time is a teachable moment that should serve to reinforce what the learner knows and to motivate further development.

Writing Guidelines:

- expands the picture of a student's own ability
- defines how the profile developed in the Performance Judgment will be communicated
- demonstrates sensitivity to students' emotional well-being
- allows for two-way communication.

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Assessment-as-Learning at Alverno College (1994), was particularly helpful in the design work. Based on a reading of this text, consultation with members of Alverno's Assessment Council, and extensive research, the following model was created by the Performance Assessment Department Facilitator.

The model described on the previous page has the following characteristics:

- Clearly defined outcomes based, in part, on the Minnesota Graduation Rule;
- Judgments based on explicit criteria (criteria specifically metered to student development level);
- A context with a realistic purpose and audience;

Performance Assessment Workshops

Date	Topic
November 16	◆ Explanation of overall design process. Consider outcomes.
January 18	◆ Mini-lesson on writing performance criteria. ◆ Group writing of selected performance criteria.
February 1	◆ Review the writing of performance criteria. ◆ Partner writing of performance criteria.
February 15	◆ *Due:* Criteria for half of outcomes (written by individual– assisted by facilitator). ◆ Critique of outcome criteria. ◆ Mini-lesson on writing performance process. ◆ Group writing of performance process.
March 1	◆ Review of writing performance process. ◆ Partner writing of performance process.
March 22	◆ *Due:* Performance process for half of outcomes (written by individual–assisted by facilitator). ◆ Critique of performance process. ◆ Mini-lesson on writing performance judgment and performance feedback. ◆ Group writing of performance judgment and feedback.
April 12	◆ *Due:* Performance judgment and feedback for half of outcomes (written by individual–assisted by facilitator). ◆ Critique of judgment and feedback. ◆ Self and group evaluation of completed assessments.
May 3	◆ *Due:* Criteria, performance process, performance judgment, and feedback for second half of outcomes (written by individual–assisted by facilitator). ◆ Self and group evaluation of completed assessments. ◆ Reevaluate course design considering newly created assessments.

- Opportunity to integrate knowledge and ability from discrete courses;
- Multidimensional sampling (multiple and varied);
- Ongoing internal and external assessment; and
- Feedback administered sequentially.

Laying Even More Groundwork (Operationalizing Performance Assessment)

Before the process of constructing the actual performance assessments could begin, all members of the department were asked to consider their current course offerings with respect to the newly established learner outcomes. After several department meetings, a general consensus was reached concerning which outcomes would be allotted to each course offering. Some course re-configuration resulted from this discussion. Although some traditional assessment remained in place, it was agreed that each of the 52 outcomes would be assessed through performance assessments created by the instructor responsible for the course instruction. Many outcomes, in fact, were assessed in multiple courses.

The next step was for the Performance Assessment Facilitator to begin the process of educating department colleagues about how to construct performance assessments. It was determined that a one or two hour (per month) workshop format would be utilized to provide in-service training. Several faculty members from outside the department also participated in workshops (they constructed assessments for outcomes related to their course offerings). The following workshop format was followed from November of 1994 until May of 1995.

Unfortunately, not all performance assessments were completed by May 3. A number of departmental faculty members worked on the assessments during the summer and fall of 1995. The assessments were completed in January of 1996.

Assessing the Move to Performance Assessment

As of January 1996, the performance assessments developed during the previous 14 months have been partially implemented. Full implementation is scheduled for the fall semester of 1996.

While it is certainly premature to assess the effectiveness of performance assessment in measuring the student attainment of the 52 learner outcomes, the five initial observations that follow may be of interest.

- The process of writing learner outcomes was an *essential* preliminary step prior to writing performance assessments. The actual act of defining the essential knowledge, skills, and dispositions for beginning teachers allowed department members to reach common consensus about future goals in teacher preparation. Additionally, by having the learner outcomes established, department members were able make large and small scale curriculum revision by determining areas of curriculum gap or unnecessary overlap.
- Extended department in-service education about the design of performance assessments was a key part of the process. Continued support and feedback were provided to department members by the Performance Assessment Department Facilitator throughout the 14 months of writing the assessments. The fact that each department member wrote and will implement his/her own performance assessments is also a key factor.
- Writing performance assessments is a *very* time consuming task. Members of the department would have felt less pressure if the college had been able to provide limited release time for the writing task.
- Even though all department members saw value in the construction of performance assessments, there were some reservations about the time investment in creating the assessments and the restrictions placed on more "intuitive" instructors by the adopted model. These two areas of concern may have been resolved through the use of an assessment plan that incorporated equal portions of traditional and performance assessment.

- Students initially seem to be pleased with the structure of the assessments. Comments generally relate to the fact that "they know what's being expected of them" and they know "what's important in the grading." They also seem pleased that their final course grade is based on a number of assessments, not merely on a mid-term and final exam score. They do comment about the "heavy" work load of elementary education courses, however.

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Educational Outcomes Assessment: An Integrated Approach

David B. Porter
Sandra M. Eisenhut

Every system is perfectly designed to yield the results observed.– Peter Sholtes

If you don't know where you're going, you'll probably end up somewhere else.– David Campbell

Assessment refers to the activities undertaken by an organization to obtain the information it needs to improve its ability to produce the outcomes it most values. Educational systems are designed to cause changes to occur within students (and less obviously: faculty). Ultimately, the effectiveness of any institution must be measured by the intellectual contributions to society made by those who are or have been a part of that institution. Even our largest institutions are imbedded within larger societal systems that determine the true value of educational outcomes and provide the appropriate context for developing internal assessment activities. This paper provides a brief account of the past, present, and future attempts by the United States Air Force Academy to integrate educational outcomes assessment with other processes inherent to an institution of higher education.

Institutional Context and Background

The United States Air Force Academy, located just north of Colorado Springs, Colorado, is both an undergraduate, degree-granting, academic institution and also an operational Air Force organization. This double identity poses some unique challenges as well as creating some unique opportunities. The Academy's student population of approximately 4,000 "cadets" receive instruction from an academic faculty of just over 500 as well as an additional 100 military officers who administer a variety of military training programs. Cadets do not "pay" tuition and, in fact, earn half the base pay of an Air Force second lieutenant while at the Academy. Each year cadets are competitively selected from among the top high school graduates across the nation. Their near 1250 average SAT scores, however, are not their most distinctive characteristic as a student body; over 80 percent have earned letters in varsity sports in high school. Ninety percent of the Academy's faculty are military officers, the majority of whom have earned Masters degrees only and are assigned to the Academy for a single three or four year military "tour." Pursuant to recent changes to public policy, the Academy is currently increasing the number of civilian faculty (nearly all of whom possess terminal degrees) toward a goal of 25 percent by the year 2000. As a military organization, the Academy faculty is extremely stable with an unusual degree of continuity provided by a few senior officers with relatively "permanent" status (three percent) and others allowed to extend their service beyond four years (an additional ten percent) and its new civilian faculty positions. However, as an institution of higher education, the faculty's average college teaching experience of less than three years suggest an educational system plagued by continual flux, predestined to perpetual intellectual immaturity and academic instability. As is often the case, the truth of the situation lies somewhere between these extremes. Nonetheless, the Air Force Academy provided a unique context for the development of an integrated program of educational assessment.

The mission of the United States Air Force Academy is to *develop and inspire air and space leaders with vision for tomorrow*. The accomplishment of this mission challenges everyone to seek ways to change the things they do so they might make more frequent and substantial contributions to the development and inspiration of others assigned to the Academy. Knowing the extent to which this mission is being accomplished is important. Congress wants to know that taxpayers are getting "their money's worth," but even more importantly, each individual at the Academy is accountable to all other individuals to ensure that a system is created in which everyone has the opportunity and encouragement to develop and contribute. The Dean recognized that *to develop and inspire* students, faculty members must not only establish high academic and professional standards, they must also motivate students to meet these standards. In order for graduates to contribute meaningfully to the Air Force, they must *know* things they didn't know when they arrived at USAFA; they must be able to *do* things they couldn't do before; and they must have positive *attitudes* toward themselves, their peers, and the Air Force. Assessing the extent to which USAFA is achieving its Educational Outcomes is essential; failure to attempt to measure those things that are most important because they are too complex or ambiguous, invites organizational distortion in the direction of readily available but functionally peripheral metrics and criteria.

As a first step in this process, the Academy's most senior academic officers met throughout academic year 1992-1993 and eventually reached consensus on seven educational outcomes they agreed were critical indicators of the institution's educational success. In the summer of 1994, it became apparent that the best way to affirm the institution's sincere commitment to these outcomes would be to begin the process of actually measuring them. This was the goal of the Educational Outcomes Assessment Working Group.

Development of the Educational Outcomes Assessment Working Group

The Educational Outcomes Assessment Working Group was comprised of 20 faculty volunteers representing each of the four academic divisions (viz., basic sciences, engineering, social sciences, and humanities) as well as several support agencies. Most of the military members of the group were drawn from the ten percent of faculty granted continuing tours. The group focused on discovering ways to determine whether or not Academy graduates would be likely to make meaningful contributions in their service to the United States Air Force and the nation. More specifically, the group's initial objectives were: 1) to increase the shared understanding of the ways in which students developed; 2) to determine which educational activities made the most positive and significant contributions to the development and inspiration of cadets; and 3) to collect relevant in-process measures of educational activities to provide convergent support for the overall assessment of graduate attributes. Together, these objectives should suggest academic alternatives and help policy makers make choices that might yield significant improvements. These needs were addressed in a multi-faceted assessment plan that included the following specific activities: Testing students' ability to frame and resolve ill-defined problems; convening student focus groups to examine their perspectives on intellectual curiosity; conducting a comprehensive inventory of curricular practices and policies; and surveying all current faculty members to establish demographic, attitudinal and activity baselines. Each of the initiatives of the Working Group was developed by sub-committees of working group members.

The activities of the Educational Outcomes Working Group epitomized continuous quality improvement and have substantially enhanced the understanding and effectiveness of educational processes at the Air Force Academy. Several aspects of this program were unique. First, the charter this group was given was very broad, complex, and difficult given the nature of the Educational Outcomes themselves. Only one of the seven original educational outcomes involved specific knowledge content; the rest of the outcomes related to the general skills, abilities, and attitudes. Second, the magnitude and scope of this effort spanned all academic departments at the institution. Traditional academic values such as skepticism and autonomy made the high degree of inclusion and integration particularly challenging. Third, success required the creation of a general and coherent framework for integrating multiple measures of outcomes and processes as well as diverse academic perspectives to provide a general assessment framework. A serious attempt was made to develop this program in a manner that was itself consistent with the principles of continuous quality improvement. Finally, the diversity of the group members was substantial; and volunteers were drawn from different academic disciplines, different educational backgrounds, different occupational experience (including both military and civilian). The overall structure of these assessment activities was designed to encourage improvement without coercion or fear. As a result, there was both a high level of faculty and student participation and a consistently high quality of contributions by group members. After nearly two years of work, multiple metrics and methodologies have been developed and refined; masses of data have been collected from students, faculty, and administrators; multiple integrative analyses performed, reported, and distributed; and the group members have retained most of their original energy and enthusiasm.

The charter of the Educational Outcomes Assessment Working Group has evolved into two distinct phases. Initially, the group was tasked with developing general operational descriptions of three particular educational outcomes at three levels of achievement. The three educational outcomes were: writing effectively; framing and resolving ill-defined problems; and developing intellectual curiosity. The three distinctive descriptive levels for each of these outcomes were to be "excellent," "satisfactory," and "deficient." After these rubrics were developed and refined, the next step was to directly assess the extent to which cadets fit these categories. One such attempt involved the development and administration of an instrument to directly measure students' ability to frame and resolve a particular ill-defined problem. Another effort involved systematically soliciting student accounts concerning their level of intellectual curiosity and how it was affected by various academic policies and practices.

Of perhaps equal importance was the shared recognition by working group members that outcomes have causes and emerge from particular contexts, the characteristics of which may determine the level of attainment of each of the outcomes. Finding ways to quantify those "causal" characteristics of educational environments independently was also seen to be an important assessment activity. Using the educational literature to identify factors that might be reasonably related to the educational outcomes was another aspect of the initial phase of inquiry. Once it identified these factors, the group sought to develop systematic approaches to collecting data that might provide objective and reliable base rates for the prevalence of these potential independent variables.

A third aspect of the Working Group's initial assessment activities was to increase awareness and understanding of education and assessment throughout the organization. The path to consensus on particular metrics inevitably leads through diverse theoretical perspectives on education. Successful negotiation of these thorny hypotheticals was essential to subsequent progress. Complete agreement was not always possible; however, fair and open negotiation and compromise enabled the development of many admittedly inadequate and incomplete assessment instruments. A clear preference for doing the right things rather than doing things perfectly right the first time, permitted progress without jeopardizing trust. A gradual increase in educational and assessment awareness was manifest by steady increases in participation, cooperation, and involvement across students, faculty, and administrators.

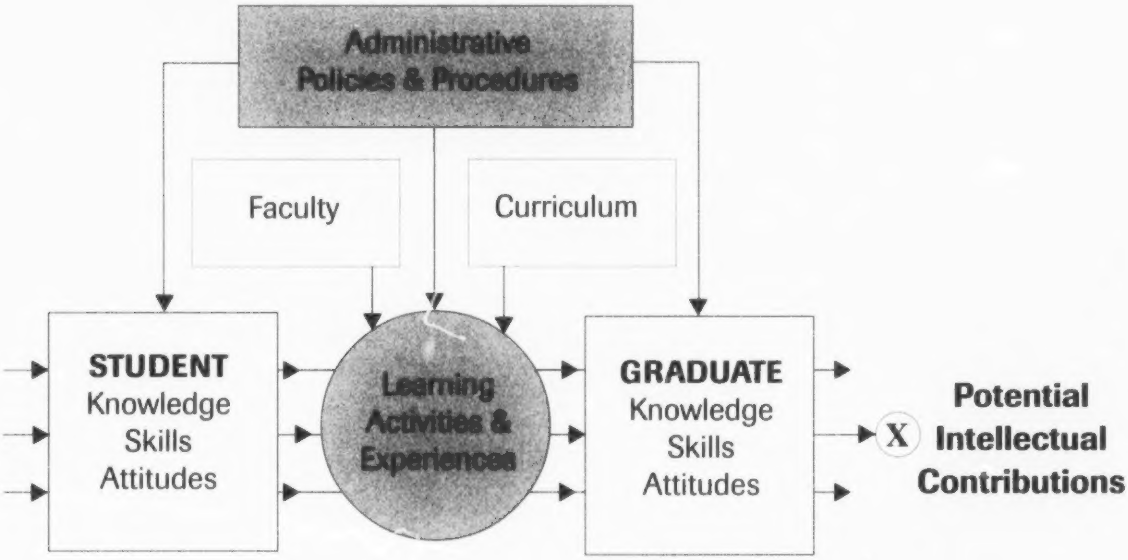
Recent Assessment Activities and Consequences

The time invested by the Working Group was estimated to be between 15 and 20 hours a month per committee member—a total of approximately 5,000 man-hours over the 18 months of Phase I assessment activities. In addition to planning time, assessment activities, and analyses, the Working Group conferred with numerous experts in education and assessment and also presented their assessment activities at the American Association of Higher Education Annual Conference to share their findings with other educators. The Phase I Educational Outcomes Assessment Working Group was composed of 20 individuals representing diverse academic constituencies. With the exception of two individuals whose promotions necessitated transfer to other geographical locations, all other members have remained active in the Working Group.

Initial and Final Reports of Phase I activities each contained nearly 100 pages outlining what the Working Group had accomplished. Each member of the committee served as a point of contact with other faculty within her or his own academic division or agency. Members were committed to excellence in the assessment activities and personally invested in "selling" the program to their respective departments or agencies. As evidence for this support, more than 53 percent of the faculty volunteered to participate in the Faculty Practices Survey—a very high level of participation. Nearly 20 percent even volunteered to complete personal demographic, attitudinal, and temperamental questionnaires and return them with private course and instructor critique information to permit more detailed analysis of determinants of perceived teaching effectiveness. The uniqueness of the Academy-specific Educational Outcomes demanded that each component of the assessment program be customized: the faculty practices survey was written to fit the unique Academy situation; the student focus groups were designed to tap cadet perspectives and used protocols to minimize distortions created by differential military ranks, and the ill-defined problem was specifically tailored to provide a realistic Air Force context within which cadets could demonstrate their prowess.

The Educational Outcomes Assessment Working Group was directly responsible for developing several uniquely effective assessment instruments and methodologies. However, to focus too narrowly on these particular products would obscure the significance of the group's most important contributions. Before addressing particular outcomes, the group needed to reach a common understanding of education in general as well as the role of assessment. The General Model of Education adopted is shown in Figure 1. It is important to note that each of the "educational outcomes" featured in the group's title were assumed to be comprised of more basic educational elements (viz., knowledge, skills, and attitudes). It was further hypothesized that the relationship among these three elements was interactive rather than additive. This suggested the relative importance of any one constituent depended upon the current level of all three components.

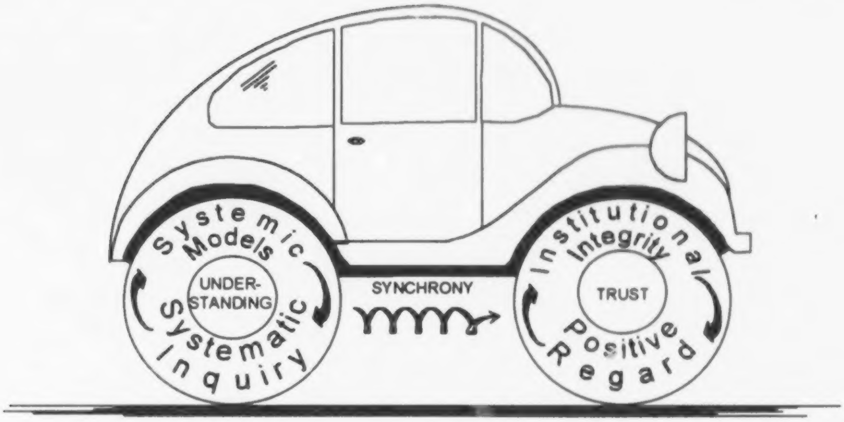
Figure 1. The General Education Model.


Administrative Policies & Procedures
Faculty
Curriculum
STUDENT
Knowledge
Skills
Attitudes
Learning Activities & Experiences
GRADUATE
Knowledge
Skills
Attitudes
X
Potential Intellectual Contributions

The group also addressed the general question of how educational assessment might best contribute to mission accomplishment and organizational renewal. A conceptual model showing the necessity of maintaining synchrony between trust and understanding is shown in Figure 2. This model served as an implicit framework for the groups' internal development as well as its interaction with the broader academic and military community.

The Working Group also authored, tested, and administered several unique assessment tools. Using a classic developmental ill-defined problem (Piaget's Plant Problem), a challenging Air force deployment scenario was created and refined to provide a valid and reliable indication of students' ability to frame and resolve ill-defined problems. Careful attention to the administration protocol allowed comparable data to be collected and also provided the opportunity to directly enhance students' awareness and appreciation of the importance of this educational outcome through post administration discussions. In-process metrics were also developed to collect data concerning faculty demographics, attitudes and practices; and curricular policies and procedures. In addition to providing useful organizational baselines, these preliminary surveys provided the data necessary for the first rudimentary analyses of factorial contributions to educational outcomes. Direct evidence for the applicability of a variety of general theoretical educational principles was found: education seemed to be enhanced by courses which featured frequent, non-adversarial evaluations; the opportunity to re-accomplish deficient work was valuable; faculty diversity contributed to the perception of departmental teaching effectiveness; even the illusion of choice was a valuable motivator for intellectual curiosity; and teachers who focused effort on student attitudes (as well as their skills and knowledge) were perceived as being more effective by their students.

Figure 2. The Qualitymobile.



Beyond the development of assessment tools, a variety of auxiliary assessment methodologies were also developed by the Working Group. The importance of random and representative sampling procedures, standardized administration protocols, instrument analysis and validation, and the criticality of subject motivation and cooperation were all rediscovered several times. Additionally, the value and potency of student participation in planning and conducting, as well as participating in, educational research was clearly demonstrated. From a broader context, the necessity to gradually integrate findings from diverse studies was recognized as being essential to sustaining organizational effectiveness. Like many other institutions, the Air Force Academy has collected a great deal of information potentially relevant to the assessment of its contributions to its students' development of particular desired outcomes (e.g., GPAs, GREs, SATs, College Base Examinations, Course and Instructor Critiques, et al.). Effective assessment demands these data be integrated into meaningful conceptual wholes (i.e., comprehensive theoretical educational models). It is only within such contexts that information from various assessment activities can be meaningfully interpreted and effectively applied. In addition to raising the general level of awareness of these educational and assessment issues, the Educational Outcomes Assessment Working Group has also demonstrated the capacity of an interdisciplinary faculty group to develop the collective talent to conduct valid and reliable educational assessment.

Phase II: New Challenges, New Opportunities

Despite the unique Academy context, the work of the group has been rewarded with invitations to speak and share techniques at national educational conferences sponsored by the American Association of Higher Education and North Central Association. Additionally, group members have been recommended for Air Force Achievement Medals and equivalent civilian awards. As further evidence of the institutional value of this work, the Dean of the Faculty recently approved an ambitious charter designed to augment and extend the Phase I work and allocated the funds necessary to support its implementation.

Educational Outcomes Assessment Working Group's Phase II Charter

The purpose of the Educational Outcomes Assessment Working Group continues to be to provide academic policy makers with the information needed to make curricular decisions and continuously improve the effectiveness of academic programs and practices. The group is assigned the task of developing and refining of a variety of assessment tools (including performance evaluations, attitudinal surveys and other process metrics) to ensure access to relevant, reliable and valid data concerning the educational outcomes and related academic processes. The group will also continue to develop supplementary assessment protocols and standards of assessment practice designed to increase understanding and enhance organizational trust. Increased decentralization, continued development, and more inclusive involvement will characterize Phase II activities and distinguish them from Phase I activities.

The *Divisional Educational Outcomes Assessment Working Groups* established in each of the four academic divisions at the conclusion of Phase I will become a primary focus of assessment activities for the next 18 months. These groups, chaired by experienced individuals from the original Working Group, designated by the Senior Permanent Professor in each academic division, and include at least one representative from each academic department. Their initial tasking will be to review all existing assessment data and conduct analyses to assess the contributions of each of the core courses offered within their respective academic divisions to each of the educational outcomes. Although a review of existing data will be of primary concern, supplemental surveys, focus groups, and other assessment activities are likely to be required to fill in gaps in existing data. Reports from each divisional group will be coordinated through the faculty working group and submitted to the Faculty Council not later than 1 May 1996. Thereafter, these groups will focus on providing support for departmental efforts to assess majors programs and non core courses within the division. An invaluable benefit of the initial assessment of the divisional core will be to provide training and experience to departmental assessment representatives.

As a complement to divisional assessment activities, *Interdisciplinary "Horizontal" Assessment Teams* will be formed to examine core course contributions to the educational outcomes occurring during the same time period. Three assessment groups will be formed: One to examine the freshman experience, another to explore the sophomore year (including the selection of academic majors), and a third to examine the upper level core courses. Each group will be chaired by experienced members of the Phase I Educational Outcomes Assessment Working Group and an effort will be made to include representatives from 34 TRW (the Military Instruction side of the Academy) and cadets themselves in each of these working groups. These groups will provide a "horizontal" perspective on cadets' educational development which will contribute greatly to the decision makers' understanding of the overall system. This group would also submit their assessment to the Permanent Professors by 1 May 1996. Similar groups might be reconvened in subsequent semesters and tasked to address specific issues.

In addition to providing support and coordination for divisional and horizontal assessment working groups, a faculty group will also focus assessment resources on particular educational issues and questions by sponsoring or conducting educational research projects. Consolidation and publication of such projects will be provided to other assessment groups and educational policy makers to increase awareness and understanding. This faculty group will be comprised of the chairs of each of the assessment working groups, representatives from the junior and senior faculty forum, Center for Educational Excellence, 34 TRW, Cadet Wing and other assessment experts.

Conclusion

Consistent with the goals of *assessment*, the activities undertaken by the Air Force Academy's Educational Outcomes Assessment Working Group were tailored to obtaining the information needed to improve our ability to produce the outcomes we most value. The successful work of the 19 Working Group members could not have been done without the support of the institution—from the Dean of the Faculty down to all faculty members. The single term that captures the uniqueness and emphasis of the Air Force Academy's approach to assessment is *integration*. Integration is the creation of wholes by bringing together diverse parts. The integration spanned across institutional agencies, diverse educational theoretical perspectives, faculty experience and backgrounds, and a multi-faceted assessment plan incorporating both inprocess and output measures. However, objective analysis of processes must continuously be integrated with subjective reactions of various organizational constituencies in order to sustain trust throughout the institution. Accomplishment of the Phase II Charter will involve recruiting and training more than 30 additional Working Group members from all academic divisions who will systematically assess the contributions of each of the Academy's more than 30 general education core courses. This will distribute the assessment expertise through approximately ten percent of the faculty and administration, and will ensure the continued development, relevancy, and effectiveness of our institutional assessment efforts.

Over the past several years of assessment, we have learned a great deal about ourselves and the educational process. It is our hope these activities are continuously developed as a part of our way of doing business, so that they will continue to help us improve through transformation and renewal. Although the assessment activities were designed and conducted within the somewhat unique context of the United States Air Force Academy, the processes and methodologies of the integrated approach used by the Working Group are generalizable to any educational institution.*

* *Note:* Opinions expressed in this paper are those of the authors' alone and not necessarily the official policy of the United States Air Force Academy or any other government agency.

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Student Academic Achievement in Graduate Programs

Patricia D. Murphy
Jeffery Gerst

The North Central Association's initiative on assessment of student academic achievement requires the inclusion of the assessment of learning of graduate students. Yet, examination of assessment plans and reports reveals that "outcome assessment of learning" is not being done. Our conclusion is supported by Kaylor and Johnson (1994) who find few examples of "outcomes assessment" in reports dealing with graduate and professional education. "Outcome assessment" of graduate education is seldom a topic of presenters at professional meetings. Finally, what is found, upon examining published records, is disturbing.

The following statement is from the assessment plan of a prestigious midwestern university that shall remain unnamed, "The goal of assessment of graduate student learning in 1994 was to evaluate the services and staff of the graduate office. Students were asked to respond to a ten-item questionnaire in which a rating was given to such matters as the courtesy, promptness, and knowledge of the staff, and the quality and usefulness of printed materials." Another example. "The knowledge and skills of graduate students are assessed continuously and include standards of admission, retention, and graduation..." What does this tell you about the academic achievement of students in the program when the emphasis is on IMPROVING student learning?

Grades of at least "B," "pass" on comprehensive exams, and "satisfactory" on the thesis or dissertation are traditional hallmarks of graduate education. Graduate faculty are searching for ways to use the activities of graduate programs for assessment where the goal is the improvement of student learning. All students who receive the graduate degree have successfully "passed" all the tasks in the program. When the goal is to improve student learning, data that students successfully completed the requirements (thesis, oral seminar, defense, etc.) do not provide evidence to identify areas of program strength or areas where the program and learning could be improved.

Faculty in graduate programs agree that they "know it when they see it," and use their expertise and perceptions to judge appropriate graduate level performance. There is little attention paid to graduate student outcomes (Conrad & Egan, 1990). Efforts to assist graduate faculty in re-examining their practices in graduate education have met with only modest success. Getting beyond the notion that "since the student successfully completed all the degree requirements the learning is assured" to gathering data relative to student learning for the purposes of identifying where learning could be improved is progressing slowly.

When graduate faculty are approached with the question, "Do *all* students do *equally* well on *all* aspects of the graduate program?" the response is, "*No.*" Therefore, ways need to be developed that are acceptable to graduate faculty to gather evidence of where students are doing well and where they are doing less well. Professors will continue to use various means, such as projects, papers, examinations, and the like to "grade" students' progress through the program. The traditional judgment about students' progress by the professor is not what this is about. The traditional means of "grading" students' progress may be too "individualized" or "case dependent." They may not provide a consistent set of benchmarks on which program-wide outcome assessment can be based.

For assessment, the purpose is to have evidence of areas in which student learning can be improved. Grades in courses, for example, do not provide such answers. We assume that students who get A's have learned more than students who get C's but we have no evidence of precisely what either group learned well or less well. So we are looking for some *direct* measures of student learning, where the students have to *"do"* something that requires them to use the knowledge or skills identified in the outcome.

Whatever the assessment method used, it must give the department the ability to diagnose program/student strengths and weaknesses so that constructive improvement measures can be devised where needed. Every method used should provide evidence of outcome attainment including specific areas of effective or ineffective performance. Evidence is needed of learning in relation to the outcomes; evidence of achievement **across** students to improve programs and learning.

A case study reporting the results of faculty efforts at North Dakota State University (NDSU) to use the traditional activities of graduate programs is reported. Several departments at NDSU have adapted Primary Traits Analysis scoring to graduate tasks in their master's and doctoral programs. Primary Traits Analysis comes originally from the scoring of written papers by English teachers. (A list of references on the technique and its uses is provided.) The technique was first used on a large scale by the National Assessment of Educational Progress in 1974. The purpose was to provide information about what students know and can do.

Primary Traits Analysis involves identifying the essential characteristics of a successfully completed task or product. What traits or characteristics are inherent in the task or product? It involves the faculty making explicit the things they look for in the comprehensive exam responses, the research proposal, the oral seminar presentation, the thesis, or the oral defense. The criteria being used are explicitly stated. For example, what constitutes a thesis that "passes"? Traits are the things the faculty care about.

Faculty in the Departments of Electrical Engineering, English, Entomology, Plant Pathology, and Zoology at NDSU have identified primary traits for various tasks in their master's or doctoral programs: written comprehensive exams, essay papers in courses, literature reviews, oral presentation in seminars, research proposals, thesis or dissertation, and final oral defense. They have adapted primary traits scoring for these tasks. (Examples of their scoring forms will be shared.) Data from the use of the forms and implications for learning improvements in the programs are offered.

Their use of Primary Traits Analysis indicates it can be a feasible way to go beyond the "grading" and "passing" of graduate students to get evidence to use in improving learning and programs.

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Catching the Vision: Assessment of College Mission through Essay Writing

Paul Moes
Ken Bussema

Introduction

Student growth in affective, moral, or philosophical dimensions is often central to the mission of many colleges—as important as many academic areas such as writing, critical thinking, etc.. Colleges and universities attempting to assess value orientation, personal philosophies, or affective growth often use questionnaires or interviews to gauge change in these areas. While these methods can be effective they are often separated from academic achievement with the result that the assessment of personal development is given lower priority. The present paper outlines a process that merges the assessment of values and affective growth with the assessment of academic achievement in a single essay writing exercise. This process is not only more efficient, it represents a view that these areas of growth are interwoven. We believe that growth in affective domains and in the development of personal philosophies ('world views') is highly interdependent with the development of critical thinking, logical argument, and verbal expression.

The Student Assessment Committee at Dordt College has developed what we believe to be a useful process for the assessment of how well our students 'catch our vision.' For the past three years we have been rating and comparing essays from freshmen and seniors who were asked to address current social issues. The committee's work focused on the development and refinement of the rating scales as well as establishing acceptable levels of reliability and validity of the instrument. The rating criteria focused on growth in six developmental areas including such areas as, reasoning and critical thinking, moral development, incorporating historical perspectives, and ability to recognize and use a world view (see last page in this paper for a complete list). Our preliminary findings have been very encouraging and we are now at the point where we can begin to investigate what types of experiences have best served to encourage and facilitate student development.

To ensure that the essay responses reflect valid expressions of true attitudes we are coupling the rating process to a senior exit interview. This interview also rates student responses on areas of moral development, personal growth in decision making, and faith development. The interview is also a component of a larger project initiated by the Coalition for Christian Colleges & Universities (CCCU). This project seeks to gauge the change in personal philosophies, moral attitudes, and faith development, and uses several methods such as the CIRP questionnaire of freshmen attitudes, interviews, alumni surveys, etc.. Thus, we are able to relate the essay findings to several indexes of student growth to give a comprehensive picture of student growth. We have also related the essay ratings to other measures of academic performance to validate it's ability to demonstrate academic growth. Presented here is a brief overview of our assessment process and some of our most recent data.

Theoretical Structure

The concepts employed in developing the Social Challenges Essay rating scales were drawn from a variety of developmental theories and research traditions. Perry's (1970) linking of cognitive and moral development—allowing persons to progressively recognize a pluralism of viewpoints requiring a personal endorsement—helped us conceptualize our mission statement as a developmental process. We wanted to capture this development at different points along a continuum of critical refection and commitment to the college's perspective. Erikson's (1968) work on identity and Marcia's (1980) concept of identity statuses reinforced the need for a developmental model. Their work helped our understanding of the "foreclosed" identity status which cautioned us against confusing a superficial endorsement of "what you're supposed to believe" with an authentic commitment to a perspective based on a critical examination of alternatives. The work of Fowler (1980) and Parks (1986) in articulating the dimensions of faith or one's world-view was also very helpful in identifying the components of our mission statement and curricular goals that we could address through this assessment process. Fowler's scoring criteria for the faith development interview provided the initial format for developing our criteria (Fowler, Jarvis & Moseley, 1986). Building on this theoretical background, and incorporating facets of the college's mission, we developed the rating scale shown in this paper. The scheme attempts to examine developmental issues, the college's religious value system, and academic growth by using a rating scale that:

- focuses on levels of critical thinking and reflection as evidenced by the recognition and examination of historical-structural dimensions, the recognition of the role of assumptions in shaping thought, and the implications and consequences of particular view points. See rating dimensions A and F for examples.
- illustrates progression from an external authority bound (they say) orientation towards an internalized ('owned') and personally endorsed perspective. See rating dimensions A and B for examples.
- links thinking with moral/value/faith orientation, in particular recognizing how biblical themes and directives shape how one views the world. See rating dimensions C and D for examples.
- demonstrates movement from an implicit (feel they know about) to an explicit articulation of beliefs, values, and ideas. See rating dimensions B, C, and D for examples.
- demonstrates a recognition on the part of the student for personal action and acceptance of personal responsibility to work toward reforming all aspects of life. See rating dimension E for an example.

The Method

As part of the all-college assessment day, students are required to write for one hour in response to four broad questions dealing with social issues. The questions require the student to identify two significant social challenges, to discuss the various factors that have contributed to the development of these concerns, and to articulate concrete ways Christians can, and should respond to these issues. Approximately one half of the freshman (according to random assignment—the remainder are involved in other assessment activities) and 95% of the seniors completed the Social Challenges Essay.

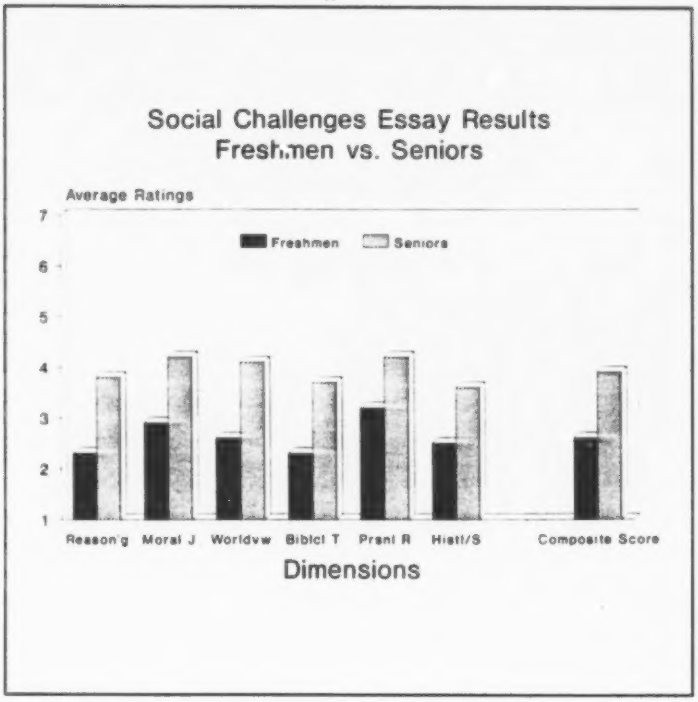
After the individual essays were coded and typed, a random sample of 60 freshman and 120 senior essays were scored. Each essay was rated blindly by three faculty members. We have used both trained raters, those who participated in a training workshop, and other interested faculty members who had minimal training with the rating scale. Preliminary results suggest that most faculty could participate in the rating process with a modest amount of preparation and minimum time commitment. Those faculty who have participated in the scoring have reported that this activity provided them with a unique view of our students' thinking and experience, helping them to better understand how to connect with today's student.

As previously discussed, the Social Challenges Essay rating scale incorporates six dimensions rated on a 1–7 scale, with seven representing more advanced levels. We are also experimenting with categorizing students into three levels of thinking—from simple to more complex, approximating the three levels outlined on the rating sheet.

Results

Inter-rater reliability was very high, with an effective reliability coefficient of r=.82 for the composite score (average of ratings for each dimension). Average ratings for each dimension are shown in Figure 1. Comparing the average ratings of freshman versus senior essays, there was a statistically reliable difference found for each rating dimension and for the composite score.

Figure 1.



Figures 2 and 3 show the distribution of levels for the freshman and senior classes. While these figures demonstrate that there are clear differences between the freshmen and senior students, further longitudinal testing will be needed to attribute the difference to student growth, rather than attrition or other variables. The Student Assessment Committee is currently developing recommendations for various committees and groups to implement change to increase the ratings and improve the level of thinking/development.

Figure 2.

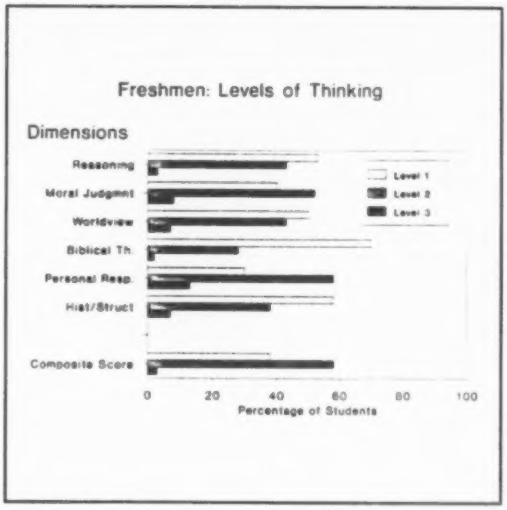
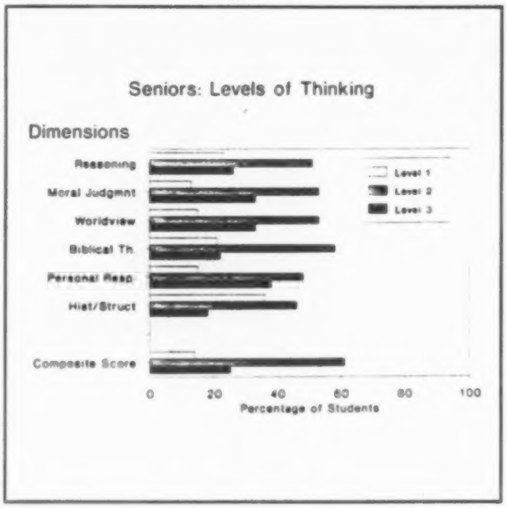


Figure 3.



Future Plans

Recommendations for improving student growth are currently in the discussion phase. Possible approaches may include curricular changes or faculty workshops on improving student thinking. In addition to working toward improved performance and ratings, we hope to add a writing/expression rating component that will more explicitly focus on aspects of writing. Plans are also being made to use the essays for departmental assessment, and to relate specific learning experiences (i.e., service learning experiences) to developmental changes.

The Student Assessment committee at Dordt College has developed what we believe to be a useful process for the assessment of "value orientation" and academic achievement within a single paradigm. This paradigm

Table 1.

Correlation r values	**Freshmen**		**Seniors**		**All Students**	
Dimension:	ACT	High School GPA	ACT	High School GPA	ACT	High School GPA
Reasoning/ Critical Thinking	.461	.464	.382	.199	.412	.249
Moral Judgment	.261^1	.309	.412	.236	.376	.248
Worldview	.408	489	.397	.106^1	.407	.195
Biblical Themes	.372	.395	.366	.146^1	.374	.195
Personal Responsibility	.337	.338	.366	.142^1	.372	.191
Historical/ Structural	.338	.392	.320	.176^1	.342	.228
Composite Score	.428	.470	.409	.185^1	.419	.240

1-These correlation values were *not* statistically significant beyond p=.05

Table 1 shows the relationship of the ratings with ACT scores and high school GPA. The higher the correlation value (i.e., closer to 1) the stronger is the relationship between the dimension and the other measure. These results suggest that the essay rating is a reliable and valid process for measuring academic growth along with affective changes.

should, with modification, prove useful for many colleges and universities exploring ways to assess the changes that occur in the quality or direction of student thinking, along with the ability to think critically. This paper focuses on an essay writing task given to freshmen and senior students over the past four years. We will present a brief developmental history of the questions, the rating scheme (i.e. theoretic and historical rationale) and local rater training, as well as reliability and validity testing of the rating process. Initial results and more recent results comparing freshmen and senior groups, along with examples of typical student responses will also be shared. Perhaps most important to any assessment process is to demonstrate "the feedback loop" or how the information has impacted, or will impact, the educational activities of the college.

In addition to focusing on the process, outcomes and feedback from the instrument, we hope to focus on the broader issue of "values and perspectives" versus "academic achievement" assessment. We feel that these are often unnecessarily dichotomized as mutually exclusive areas and therefore require a separate process of assessment. The essay rating allows for an analysis of the developmental changes that occur in how students views on faith or life issues may change over a college career, and how these changes effect their problem solving approaches to social issues.

Social Challenges Essay: Description from Dordt's Assessment Plan

The Social Challenges Essay was developed by Student Assessment Committee members, with special input from members of the psychology department, essay raters, and members of the General Education Committee. Students are required to write for one hour in response to four broad questions concerning current social problems. The general instructions to students, 'stimulus' questions, along with the rating criteria, are all included at the end of this document. The rating criteria are derived from the developmental theories of James Fowler, Erik Erikson, and William Perry as well as concepts drawn from the *Framework for Dordt's Educational Program*. The first two years of testing were designed to test the instrument as well as the process. By way of the essay we are attempting to measure students' ability to articulate and apply the principles articulated in Dordt's own mission statement. Essays are also examined for general developmental changes in thinking patterns and critical analysis.

The results of the essay ratings for 1992-93, as well as for the senior class of 1994, are shown in the figures at the end of the document. Initial results appear to show an improvement in ratings between freshmen and senior classes. However, since the essays were not rated in a 'blind' fashion (e.g. with the class of the individual withheld from the rater), a replication was required (recently completed) to provide further validation of this difference. Figure 1 also shows that, while seniors do appear to show higher ratings, there is also considerable room for improvement. The results from the Senior class of '94 (Figure 2), despite being based on slightly different rating categories, a different testing situation, and a new set of raters from the first testing, show remarkably similar results to the previous testing. The overall effective rater reliability of .72 is considered quite high for a subjective rating system (Rosenthal & Rosnow, 1984). Thus, the replication of ratings for two senior groups, along with the strong inter-rater reliability, give the committee a high degree of confidence in using the essay writing test as an effective means of assessing student progress. Further validation is planned in the near future (completed by the time of the presentation) by examining the relationship between student responses on the essay, taped interviews with a select sample, and responses to the CIRP opinion questionnaire.

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Appendix

Student Assessment Essay

Scoring Criteria:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

A. Level of Critical Thinking		
reasons in terms of concrete cause and effect, T/F manner (dualism); simplistic arguments with little support or cohesion	recognizes diversity of positions and perspectives, but not sure how they fit together, "it all depends"	explicit, analytical, systematic, critical (perspectival), comprehensive
B. Level of Moral Reasoning and Judgment		
external authorities, arbitrary view of right and wrong as defined by authority figures; doing what you're told	internalized authorities, knows answers, but not sure why; right and wrong depends on (relative) to situation	attempts to understand and articulate norms and principles derived from an internalized understanding of the value implications of one's faith commitment
C. Worldview: Awareness of faith implications of assumptions, issues and decisions		
simplistic; not aware of having a world view as an explicit and interrelated system of beliefs, assumptions and commitments	worldview consists primarily of a collection of conventional beliefs, assumptions and morals; little evidence of reflection on the more generalized implications of assumptions, beliefs or commitments	external authorities, arbitrary view of right and wrong as defined by authority figures; doing what you're told
D. Incorporates Understanding of Biblical themes (creation-fall-redemption)		
simplistic; naive application of biblical concepts; no acknowledgment of cohesive, interrelated themes in scripture	partial recognition and understanding of the interrelated themes of scripture; emphasizing one aspect, e.g., creation or salvation over the others	clearly articulates importance of creational norms, the reality of sin and out call to reclaim
E. Perception of Responsibility in Response to Challenges		
not my problem; shows little empathy; situation judged in terms of own needs and concerns; simplistic solutions without evidence of personal commitment to action	aware of personal impact and need for involvement; unclear as to the nature and extent of communal responsibility and action; solutions/suggestions are broader in scope, but not comprehensive	clearly sees self as involved and responsible for dealing with issues, in concrete, clearly articulated ways; sensitive to the broader communal impact of individual action
F. Historical/Structural Basis		
no mention or acknowledgment of historical development or impact of societal structures-- problems are based exclusively on personal responsibility	mentions historical development and/or societal structures, but focus is on personal, immediate or situational influences	explicitly states that problems often have historical context, and that societal or cultural structures contribute to individual and societal problems

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Strengthening One's Assessment Plan

Douglas K. Lange

Overview

Historically, "assessment" was a term used by our academic departments trying to determine if our graduates compared favorably with national normative data. We believed that if our students performed at or above national averages we were affecting student learning. There wasn't any real concern over the management of the curricula, realizing that many programs were accredited by the Accreditation Board of Engineering Training (ABET), and that was "good enough" for us. At a university like ours, focused on engineering and science curricula, familiarity with and the attraction to statistics for justification of a stance is natural. What was difficult, though, was finding an educational paradigm for building a model assessment program. The key phrase that kept us focused was that "assessment was about setting graduation standards and not about raising graduation standards."

An identified concern in the development of our assessment plan was to support the standard that general education was an integral part of the engineering and science curriculum. General education requirements had previously been viewed as "service" courses that supported the engineering and science degree programs. It seemed unusual to have the general education components be regarded as a vital part of the university's degree programs.

Where We Went

As a small university of 2,400 students, we started with what came naturally—individual attention for students. Our goal was to affect student learning one on one. Questions came at us: How do we know student learning is taking place? What does our mission say about affecting student learning? What do our corporate advisory boards say about the quality of our graduates? What data already exist that can help us know that we are meeting our mission? How much information do we need to satisfy the questions? Obviously we wanted to show that we could quantify any quality. We also knew that real student achievement was a singular event and not in and of itself a statistic. We wanted to assure that each and every student met his or her career goals for gaining a university education.

The second step focused on finding the appropriate delivery mechanism to help each student achieve his or her academic goals. At the South Dakota School of Mines and Technology, all faculty have assigned academic advising responsibilities. The assessment planning committee believed that there were processes already in place between faculty and students through the advising process. The committee settled on advising as a process to propel academic achievement. Advising would allow us to give feedback into improving student interaction with the university.

The third and most pivotal phase centered on how to store the data that would be collected. It is one thing to derive data. It is another to turn it into meaningful information. It was still another question of how do we get information into advisors "hands" that would allow them to mentor the student toward academic achievement and progress toward degree completion and the achievement of student's goals. We were also concerned about the management of the curriculum and how the student's individual academic achievement related to students' success rates in a department, in a college, and within the university.

What We Developed

As we answered each question, it became clear that:

- individual attention upon each student' academic achievement remained paramount;
- interaction between faculty members and students during the academic advising process was a key component;
- general education curriculum management needed to be developed; and
- technology was the tool that would help us.

Our assessment plan was developed to use a centralized database on all students detailing each student's interaction with the university. At a student's initial encounter, a student would respond to a series of questions about his or her educational plans as well as a series of questions about her/his abilities to meet those plans—such as their mathematics or English readiness. As a follow up, advisors would be able to meet with each student and plan an appropriate course of action for the initial (and subsequent) semesters. The advisors would also be able to add through comments any follow up information about their advisees and any barriers (either institutional or personal) that might hinder individual student success.

Our ultimate goal remains that we should be able to successfully track how a student goes from "point a" (enrollment) to "point a-prime" (graduation). We will establish a normal path that a student travails on his or her journey toward graduation and the completion of his or her goals. We will also be able to determine if a student had veered off the normal path toward his or her success. If that would happen, electronically we could notify the student and his or her advisor that an intervention was necessary to bring the student back toward a successful journey.

The importance of this plan lies in its ability to track students individually, by department, by college, and by overall university plans. It also allows us to justify success patterns against the mission of the university to provide excellence in undergraduate education. Some of the data collected on students used for evaluation purposes include:

- ACT scores
- CIRP responses both individually each and collectively
- Placement test scores on math, physics, and English
- Mid-level testing results (CMP and student satisfaction)
- Student goal statements with a sophomore follow-up
- Electronic photos
- Biographical information
- Transcript data
- Degree check lists (audits)
- Alumni survey results (ACT)

All of the above information exists in individual and aggregate student data to help faculty members gain feedback to assure currency in the curriculum via technology. The resultant decision was to begin an Individualized Education Program (IEP) for each student. It ties directly to the mission of the university by providing a "broad educational environment that fosters a quality educational experience..."

The purpose of the IEP is to supply information to advisors electronically that will allow faculty members to do the best possible job in helping individual students achieve their academic goals through advising. The electronic advising system will furnish information on student career expectations and goals, as well as on the individual strengths and weaknesses of each student. Student problems can be identified and appropriate interventions can be designed to propel the student toward success.

In addition to the electronic advising provided to each advisor, departmental assessment is continuing to measure how well the goals and objectives of the university are being met. Departmental major field exit achievement tests, industrial advisory board comments from corporations employing our graduates, their comments on students' knowledge and mastery, and student competition results in regional and national contests, all add to the department's ability to understand student academic achievement.

Although student academic learning occurs in the classroom, SDSM&T recognizes learning occurs more broadly than in only one arena. Learning should occur everywhere within the university. To keep that paradigm before us, the database will also capture a host of other data available on various student records:

- Leadership experiences
- Cooperative education experiences
- Work history
- Financial aid information
- Scholarship information
- Volunteer in the community information
- Athletic participation
- "Brag card" data
- Disciplinary records

What about General Studies

The general studies component of all degree programs at the university is composed of mathematics, basic sciences, humanities and social sciences. The goal of the general studies component must provide the foundation and preparation for the student to proceed to more advanced courses in the curricula. Learning objectives for the students completing general studies includes: a) improved problem solving skills, b) critical thinking skills that are transferable to any profession, c) improved science literacy, and d) communication skills.

The assessment planning committee decided to address mid-level assessment via the ACT CMP exam. The results of the examination will give faculty members the necessary data to determine student retention of previously learned concepts. Information will be used to understand what was being retained and what changes might be necessary either in teaching emphasis or curriculum to assure that important material is remembered and learned. The process will also serve notice to students that information from previous courses is important for future learning, and not to be forgotten.

Closing the Loop

To be an effective instrument of change, our assessment plan provides for feedback of results to those responsible for teaching and learning, and the responsible parties must act upon the information. The Individualized Education Program is, of itself, a feedback mechanism not only to faculty members but to students themselves.

Information from placement testing, mid-career testing, and exit exams will be returned to college deans, faculty members of the departments, and to curriculum committees so that they can continue to plan for courses that meet students' needs. Inherent in all of this process remains the fact that faculty have the responsibility for maintaining academic excellence in the classroom. They have chosen "graduation standards" for their program and the methods for measuring student academic achievement against those standards.

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Chapter VIII

Assessing Student Learning: The Role of Faculty in Assessment Plans and Programs

Decentralization and Faculty Ownership: Keys to a Successful Assessment Strategy

Terrence Foley
Walter Mackey
Jo-Ann Terry

Henry Ford Community College is a large, comprehensive community college located near the city of Detroit. Its student population is significantly multiethnic and multiracial and includes a large number of students who do not speak English as their primary language. The city of Dearborn, where Henry Ford is located, possesses the largest Arabic speaking population in the United States.

Faculty Ownership of Instructional Assessment

Henry Ford Community College is proud of its history of shared governance; the faculty at this institution plays a significant role in shaping decisions that influence the direction that the college will take as it reassesses its mission of teaching and learning. It is in this light that instructional assessment was conceived at Henry Ford. Any attempt to impose a top-down assessment plan would be doomed to failure from the onset. The administration at Henry Ford Community College wisely placed the development and implementation of assessment into the hands of faculty immediately after initial preparations for the Spring 1995 NCA evaluation were begun.

The institution has never had an Office of Institutional Research that is common to other large community colleges. Therefore, initial structures and responsibilities for assessment had to be developed from the ground up. The administration made the necessary financial and personnel commitment so that a faculty-driven model could succeed. In January 1993, a faculty member was released from all teaching responsibilities in order to begin the groundwork for the development of an assessment plan. This individual, Walter Mackey from the Mathematics Division, had experience and training in evaluation and measurement strategies and had served as a consultant to local school districts in their attempt to implement outcomes assessment.

His first three months were spent in numerous small group meetings with faculty members at the department level. As is the case with many institutions, the faculty at HFCC were largely unaware of the current assessment mandates. They taught their classes and were professional in keeping abreast of new developments in their areas of expertise, but assessment and related educational issues were not part of their thinking.

Eleven representatives from the college attended the March 1993 NCA Annual Meeting in Chicago and used this time away from campus to organize and plan for the direction of assessment at HFCC. These representatives were members of the embryonic Instructional Assessment Committee that was to play a major role in the coordination of assessment efforts at the college. The make up of this committee was mostly faculty, so that assessment requirements and requests would be viewed by faculty as coming from faculty.

The committee, which is still in existence, has co-chairs: an instructional Vice-President and a faculty member. The faculty co-chair, Terry Foley, is the Director of the Learning Lab. This is a faculty position at HFCC, and in his role as Director, Foley had been involved in using instructional assessment information for years. His being the chair of the faculty strike committee also gave him more credibility that was extremely helpful in dealing with certain groups that were less than enthusiastic about having to assess their program's effectiveness. The position of Faculty Co-chair is given three-quarters released time from teaching responsibilities.

The composition of the Instructional Assessment Committee was designed so that most of the areas on campus that would have to be involved in a successful assessment operation were represented in some form. Members include the directors of counseling, computer operations, the placement office, developmental education, and registration. All major career and academic areas of the college have representation.

The Fall 1993 semester was spent writing the HFCC Instructional Assessment Plan and meeting with individual program faculties as they developed their specific assessment plans. A program was defined as "a structured series of courses leading to either a degree or a certificate." It soon became clear that some standardization would have to be imposed on local assessment plans or there would be chaos across campus. As a result, the Instructional Assessment Committee instructed all sixty-five programs across the college to report their assessment intentions in a common Goal-Outcome-Criteria flowchart format. Two examples of flowcharts are included at the end of this article. Sample flowcharts were prepared using non-existent programs as examples, and literally hundreds of small meetings were conducted between local program assessment committees and the two teachers released to assist in this development process. Divisions of the college such as English and Mathematics that do not offer degrees or certificates were officially exempt from the program assessment model. These areas of the college, however, were actively involved in significant course-level assessment activities and will be included in the HFCC assessment model for General Education when it is completed in approximately one year.

The Henry Ford Community College Instructional Assessment Plan went through a total of fifteen revisions before it was finally adopted at a meeting of the entire College Organization a year later in September 1994. This model contains a specific accountability structure so that there is subtle pressure on program areas to view assessment as more than a once-in-ten-year activity to placate NCA in its accreditation process. Although most programs have been cooperative in the assessment efforts, there are some areas that view assessment as a minor irritation that will go away if ignored long enough. As a result, a reporting structure was included in the HFCC Instructional Assessment Plan to encourage all areas of the institution to cooperate in this venture. Each October 1st, all program directors and lead teachers must submit a detailed Annual Assessment Report to the appropriate Instructional Vice-President and to the Instructional Assessment Committee. These reports are reviewed at both levels and an annual State of Assessment Report is made by the faculty co-chair of the Instructional Assessment Committee to the entire College Organization at its January meeting.

Decentralization of Instructional Assessment Operations

Assessment has two purposes: compliance and instructional improvement. These two objectives may not necessarily be mutually exclusive, but it is clear that an assessment strategy that is dictated by compliance alone will generate a different faculty response than one that is established to help teachers improve instruction. Henry Ford Community College, in establishing the structures for generating assessment information, maintains two separate institutional bodies: one, administratively operated, that responds to state and federal mandates for information, and the other, the instructional assessment operation, the main purpose of which is to provide the teaching faculty with information that will help improve the teaching and learning process at HFCC. The compliance side of the coin is under the direction of the Coordinator of Institutional Development and Systems.

The other side of the coin is the faculty-driven instructional assessment area. Assessment at Henry Ford is decentralized in the sense that assessment activities are the responsibility of the people most closely associated with the students in the program, namely the faculty at the program or classroom level. The instructional assessment operation simply provides the programs, divisions, and departments with services such as data requests, scanning facilities, consultation, development of specialized databases, questionnaire construction, and assistance in test development. These operations will eventually be housed in a new Center for Assessment and Instructional Innovation that is scheduled to open in approximately two years and is temporarily housed in a makeshift trailer. The assessment portion, the "A" part of the CAII, currently is composed of four individuals:

- the faculty co-chair of the Instructional Assessment Committee (3/4 released time) whose primary role is the administration of the daily operations of instructional assessment;
- the Technical Assessment Coordinator (three credit hour extracontractual assignment) who supervises the Faculty Technical Liaison(s), assists the Computer Technician in data production, and produces statistical analyses that are non-routine in nature;
- the Faculty Technical Liaison (one-half released time) who prepares reports for individual faculty assessment requests, helps develop specialized databases for storing information at the program and department level, and meets with small faculty groups in helping to plan assessment activities; and
- the Computer Technician Specialist (full-time position, non-faculty) who downloads data from the mainframe system, performs scanning operations, and generates statistical reports that are of a relatively simple nature.

When completely established, the assessment operation will have a full-time secretary. Long-range plans also call for funds to provide additional Assistant Faculty Technical Liaisons who will be given one released class to provide specific ad-hoc services when necessary.

The assessment team in the CAII serves as the intermediary to other areas on campus that provide services essential for local assessment efforts. Production of information external to the campus, namely questionnaires from students after they are no longer attending HFCC, employer information, and data from four-year institutions, is the ultimate responsibility of the Coordinator of Development and Institutional Systems. The instructional assessment team serves as the liaison between this office and those programs that require external data for assessment efforts.

While the instructional assessment operation provides services and support to individual assessment teams, decentralization ultimately means that programs and departments are responsible for securing whatever resources are needed for their plans. If data entry is needed and these data cannot be scanned, then each program or department must provide data entry personnel out of its own budget. The assessment team will set up a data entry program and provide training but will not be responsible for actual data entry. The latter has been a major problem for areas that have opted for standardized non-scannable final exams that must be maintained in a database for future analyses. If specific assessment plans require that employers be contacted, there is no currently operable centralized mechanism for providing this information. At least for the present, this is a program or department responsibility.

It is clear that a faculty-driven, decentralized model comes with a price, and that price may be a little less efficiency than might be present in a highly-structured, administratively-driven model. But the faculty at Henry Ford Community College feels it is a price worth paying. Assessment is theirs, and the faculty believes that improving teaching and learning in the classroom is the essential goal of instructional assessment. Intentional separation of institutional assessment and instructional assessment may be more costly, but an instructional assessment operation that is going to be taken seriously by faculty must be customized to the particular needs of the sixty-five programs on campus. A standardized report for Automotive Service may not be applicable to the needs of the faculty in a pre-engineering curriculum.

The Future for the Assessment Effort

The key players in the instructional assessment effort, the faculty on reassigned time, have been extremely busy over the last three years. But it has been a very profitable three years. Henry Ford Community College has been transformed from an institution in which structured assessment was found only in isolated areas to one in which all programs are required to report annually their assessment activities and results.

The immediate assessment efforts at Henry Ford Community College will concentrate on the question of general education assessment. As mentioned earlier, each program must structure its assessment plan in a Goal-Outcome-Criteria format. Every plan will have another goal, that of a yet-to-be-determined General Education statement that will be common to all degree programs. The immediate task is to determine student outcomes that will cross all program lines. This is a difficult task for any institution. But an institution whose faculty views assessment as its responsibility should be able to reach agreement on this issue. Had the development of the assessment structure at this college not been a faculty-driven one from its inception, then campus-wide consensus on general education outcomes would be far less likely.

Another area that will require concerted effort and attention in the very near future is that of external data Many of the sixty-five programs at Henry Ford have developed assessment models that require data from students after they have left the institution, from employers of program graduates, or from four-year institutions that accept HFCC transferees.

Instructional Assessment is not a smoothly running operation without problems or failures; it is a process in an embryonic stage that has a potential, if properly nourished, for having a significant impact upon the institution and its students. The optimism that permeates the process results from the fact that full-time teaching faculty believe that instructional assessment is their operation and its results are being used, not to punish or compare different areas of the college, but to give faculty specific information that will enable them to do a better job in teaching students. At an institution like Henry Ford Community College, an assessment plan that was not decentralized and faculty-driven would be an assessment plan that would have had minimal long-range impact on daily classroom activity.

Appendix A: Assessment Goals, Outcomes, and Criteria

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Appendix A.

Assessment Goals, Outcomes, and Criteria

Associate in Arts Degree–Interior Design

Program Goal	Student Outcomes	Assessment Criteria
The goal of the Associate in Arts Degree - Interior Design is to give program graduates the basic skills in Interior Design that will prepare them for transfer to four-year programs if desired, or possible entry-level positions in the field of Interior Design. To achieve the above stated mission, we introduce and explore the following concepts and skills. Our goals is to build on the students' understanding of these concepts and skills in each art laboratory class they take in our program.	Students will be able to demonstrate a functional knowledge of basic interior design skills.	75% of all program graduates will have a satisfactory instructor rating on an exit portfolio review.
	Students will possess a functional verbal and visual vocabulary about interior design concepts.	75% of the program graduates will demonstrate successful mastery of 75% of the significant visual and verbal vocabulary in Interior Design, as measured by faculty observation at the time of the portfolio review.
	Students who desire to transfer will have the skills to pursue a four-year degree in Interior Design.	After transferring to a four-year institution, HFCC Interior Design students will succeed at a rate comparable to students who took all their training at the four-year school. (Until records are made available from transfer institutions, HFCC will collect data through a college-wide graduate survey.)
	Graduates will possess the knowledge and skills necessary for an entry-level position in Interior Design.	75% of program graduates will be rated as having the competency to attain an entry-level position in the field of Interior Design (by a professional in the field, e.g., member(s) of the Interior Design Advisory Committee or potential employer).

Certificate of Achievement Program–Food Service Management

Program Goal	Student Outcomes	Assessment Criteria
The Certificate of Achievement Program - Food Service Management is designed to give graduates a concentrated approach to the technical knowledge and skills required for entry-level employment in the hospitality industry.	The student will demonstrate the mastery of the essential skills in food service operations.	100% of all certificate graduates will demonstrate mastery of food service operations by receiving a score of at least 75% by the National Restaurant Association in the Introduction to Hospitality National Test.
	Students will demonstrate the mastery of essential knowledge in sanitation.	100% of the graduates will demonstrate competencies on basic sanitation by successfully passing the National Restaurant Association (NIFI) Test with a score of 75% or higher. 100% of the graduates will demonstrate competencies in sanitation by successfully completing the Michigan Department of Public Health Food Management Certification Test with a score of at least 75%.
	The students will demonstrate a mastery of the essential knowledge of nutrition.	100% of the graduates will demonstrate competencies on basic nutrition by successfully passing the National Restaurant Association Test with a score of 75% or higher.
	Graduates will be readily employed in the Hospitality Industry.	Within six months after graduation, 65% of the certificate graduates will be employed in appropriate positions in the hospitality field.

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Encouraging Faculty Participation in Student Learning Outcomes Assessment

Robert L. Reid
Timothy Schibik
Curt Serbus
Charles F. Harrington

Prologue

One of the more pressing challenges facing the assessment movement in higher education is that of engaging faculty in assessment. A number of paper and plenary sessions delivered at the 1995 AAHE Conference on Assessment and Quality stressed the importance, even the necessity, of faculty ownership and involvement in successful student learning outcomes assessment. The strongest call for faculty participation was voiced by faculty and staff at institutions accredited by the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools.

This past spring, the University of Southern Indiana (USI) submitted it's APR, *A Plan for the Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes at the University of Southern Indiana*, for review by NCA consultant-evaluators. This plan has preceded our decennial self-study and campus visit, scheduled for September 1996. At the heart of our academic assessment initiative as embodied in our APR, are our faculty whose support for, and leadership in student learning outcomes has been exceptional. The assessment initiatives implemented at the University of Southern Indiana have evolved from a consensus among our faculty that the assessment of student learning and the improvement of teaching are interdependent and complementary.

Point of First Departure

Academic assessment has been an important theme at USI for the past decade. In 1985, following a twenty-year history as a regional campus of Indiana State University, USI was given autonomy as a separate four-year public institution with its own board of trustees. That same year the university began its self-study for reaffirmation of accreditation. Faculty were broadly represented on the self-study steering committee and each of the study groups. The growing national concern for quality control in higher education was a major influence guiding the institutional assessment and one of the study committees focused its attention on student academic assessment outcomes. Our final *Self-Study Report* noted that several assessment measures, both formal and informal, were already well established in various academic areas. These included an institution-wide course and instructor evaluation system, mandatory placement testing in verbal and mathematics skills for all entering freshmen, and a newly implemented alumni outcomes survey based on five-year intervals from the year of graduation from the institution. The *Self-Study Report* recommended expansion of these initiatives into a comprehensive program of academic assessment. To be successful, such a program required broad-based faculty support within a structure whose design enhanced the teaching-learning process. These recommendations were consistent with NCA evaluative criteria, especially Criterion Three, "*The Institution is accomplishing its purposes.*"

Ground Zero

Building upon this growing awareness of the importance of assessment to the institution, an ad hoc committee developed an outline for a university-wide assessment plan during the Fall of 1987. This faculty-led committee included representatives from all five of the university's academic schools, as well as the University Division, a unit that serves the needs of academically undeclared (majors) students. Within the year the committee had submitted a report calling for the development of an inventory of student learning outcomes assessment activities, the adoption of a student satisfaction survey to be administered annually, and the appointment of a "Coordinator of Assessment" from the general faculty to facilitate the administration of the various student learning assessment programs.

A concrete example of the response to assessment spurred by this original campus-wide plan can be cited in our Psychology Department. Under the leadership of a new department chair who served also as the institution's first Coordinator of Assessment, the department sought to evaluate and revise its curriculum. This plan followed a model developed by Palladino and Eison in which curriculum revision, depends in part, on student learning assessment data. The department's first step was to develop curricular goals and to determine the degree to which their curricular requirements and course offerings were consistent with those goals. This curricular revision was guided by the revised curricular goals as well as data gathered from peer institutions. The psychology course offerings, major requirements, and course sequences at 50 similar institutions were analyzed. One measure of the effectiveness of the departmental revisions has been to monitor the academic program by evaluating the data collected from the administration of the EST Major Field Test administered to graduating seniors.

Looking at Tomorrow, Today

Early on in the assessment movement, the university decided to adopt a pro-active approach to student learning outcomes assessment. On our campus assessment is viewed and accepted as a fundamental necessity in the university's pursuit of institutional effectiveness. In spite of increase interest in and focus on student learning outcomes and instructional effectiveness by our regional and various professional academic program accrediting bodies, our faculty have spearheaded a number of assessment initiatives that continue to have an impact on the institution. The following are nine of the more notable assessment undertakings:

1. During the Spring of 1988, the Coordinator of Assessment, working with the Student Academic Affairs Committee of the Faculty Senate, brought a proposal through the faculty governance structure that committed the university faculty to devote one entire day per academic year to the collection of assessment data. This initiative was based on the overwhelming success of a similar approach implemented at the University of Tennessee. Beginning fall semester 1988, "Assessment Day" has been held during the second week in November. All incoming freshmen and continuing juniors are administered the ETS Academic Profile. During this day all university classes are canceled. Students are required to participate in assessment activities as indicated by the following passage from the University *Bulletin* "In order for the University to assess and improve its academic programs, periodic measures of student perception and intellectual growth must be obtained. As a requirement for graduation, every student shall participate in periodic evaluation procedures, which may include examinations in general education and the major field of study…" Faculty, staff, and students serve as proctors for assessment activities. This process occurs annually and to date, nearly nine thousand students have been tested.

2. The university assessment committee, composed of faculty and academic administrators operating since 1987, was incorporated into the formal faculty governance structure during the 1995 spring semester. The faculty senate approved the inclusion of the Assessment Committee as a formal standing committee of the Senate and charged with the following:

    A. *To facilitate the review and evaluation of student learning outcomes and the program assessment needs of the university;*

B. To facilitate the review of existing assessment practices and measures, monitor their effectiveness, and offer suggestions as appropriate; and

C. To make recommendations for planning, policy development, and review regarding assessment activities within the University.

Faculty from each academic school are appointed to the committee for two year terms. The Director of Institutional Research and Assessment, and one academic Dean serve as ex-officio members.

3. A close working relationship has been developed between the Assessment Committee and the University Core Curriculum Committee. USI began implementation of a new general education core during the 1995 fall semester. This program was developed by a specially appointed faculty committee and the University Curriculum Committee. This new program was discussed and endorsed by University faculty following a series of lengthy open hearings. The database developed through previous student learning outcomes assessment using the ETS Academic Profile will enable us to assess the effectiveness of this new set of required courses.

4. The Director of Institutional Research and Assessment (also a member of the general faculty) provides a continual flow of information and assessment feedback to deans, department chairpersons, and individual faculty regarding the assessment of general education, the major, and assessment-related implications from various academic program criteria and expectations. The Director serves as a member of the Academic Affairs and Academic Planning Councils which assure an open line of communication and coordination of the assessment activities undertaken within the academic schools.

5. Working with the Faculty Senate, academic administrators assure administrative, technical, and financial support for faculty assessment initiatives, particularly faculty development activities relative to assessment. A number of outstanding assessment conferences cater to the needs of faculty regardless of their respective levels of expertise in classroom assessment. Academic deans and the Vice President for Academic Affairs encourage faculty to participate in these regional and national meetings.

6. The relationship between the institution's assessment plan and the institution's educational mission is communicated broadly. Faculty share the understanding that assessment of student learning outcomes assures institutional and institutional effectiveness.

7. Faculty participation in the development, implementation, and continual evaluation of the assessment plan is encouraged, and to a certain degree expected.

8. During the fall and winter of 1994, faculty in our School of Business developed program assessment goals consistent with each of their academic degree program objectives. Assessment measures were tailored to address these objectives. Commercially available and "in-house" surveys are being used to collect requisite assessment data.

9. Faculty and academic administrators have open access to the institution's longitudinal assessment database. The Office of Institutional Research and Assessment maintains a comprehensive database of student learning outcomes measures and prepares routine periodic and adhoc reports for deans, department chairpersons, curriculum committees, and individual faculty.

Conclusion

Academic program review and student learning outcomes assessment at the University of Southern Indiana are characterized by a spirit of collegiality and cooperation. Faculty understand and accept responsibility for assessment. The institution's assessment approach is dynamic and flexible. At every juncture, faculty feedback is sought and encouraged. Assessment is viewed not as an end in itself, but a means to the end of instructional and institutional improvement. Our faculty take a keen interest, as well as great pride in making the student's learning experience as effective and efficient as possible.

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The Role of Faculty in Assessment at Ohio Wesleyan University

David H. Hickcox
Louise S. Musser

Ohio Wesleyan University's Assessment Plan is tailored specifically for faculty participation. As a result of the college's strong faculty governance system, faculty established ownership of the assessment process from the beginning. The Assessment Committee is a standing faculty committee authorized by faculty vote. Indeed, the five faculty members on the Assessment Committee had an especially strong role in developing the Assessment Plan: *only* faculty members on the Committee served as consultants for fellow faculty members in the development of assessment strategies. Furthermore, assessment plans for both departments and the general education requirements were developed by the faculty.

Faculty Governance

Ohio Wesleyan's governance is shared by faculty, students, and administrators. This system of shared governance is one of Ohio Wesleyan's unique features and is manifested by an extensive system of committees. The faculty, largely through its committee system, is central to decision-making processes on campus. A salient feature of the system is the collegial nature of deliberations. Prior to and at faculty meetings, issues are thoroughly discussed, with all voices heard. Thus decisions tend to yield consensus, ensuring that policies and procedures will have strong faculty involvement and oversight, i.e., the faculty will have established "ownership."

The development and implementation of Ohio Wesleyan's Assessment Plan is a case in point. Since Ohio Wesleyan's faculty obviously have to live with the long-term consequences of the plan they establish, the more involved they are with its implementation, the more committed they will be to its success. Full faculty participation in the Assessment Plan leads to an increased sense of responsibility and ownership and a high stake in the outcome of assessment.

Ohio Wesleyan's Assessment Plan has had strong faculty input and involvement at all levels. It was developed to meet the specific needs of the college's curriculum and its students, and is tailored not just to a liberal arts program but specifically to the college's unique curricular and governance structure. Plans for assessing both departments and the distribution requirements were developed in their entirety by the faculty within each department. Thus faculty in each department are strongly involved in assessment. With the feedback loop passing through the faculty at the teaching level, assessment can only result in continued strength of the majors and general education programs, and increased enhancement of teaching and learning at Ohio Wesleyan.

Assessment of Departmental Outcomes

The Ohio Wesleyan curriculum is based on departments and programs. The former are structured with a chair and faculty members, all of whom teach in a particular discipline. Programs are composed of members from several departments, with one faculty member serving as the program chair. For example, English is a department with its own specific faculty, while Women's Studies is a program with faculty drawn from the English, History, and other departments whose regular offerings fit into the Women's Studies area.*

The Assessment Committee informed each department of the need to develop an Assessment Plan that went beyond the normal measures of achievement obtained by course grades. Committee members explained that noting passing grades in courses is not an acceptable assessment strategy. Departments that had ongoing assessment techniques such as the keeping of portfolios, a senior capstone course, or a senior comprehensive exam, were encouraged to build on those strengths to expand and enhance the assessment process. The Committee encouraged other departments to base their initial assessment efforts on approaches that seemed best suited to their goals.

The Committee used several methods to inform and encourage departments. First, a written description of the assessment requirement was sent to every department head. Most departments responded with a carefully developed departmental assessment plan. Announcements were made at each monthly faculty meeting and questions about the planning of the assessment process were solicited. A follow-up meeting was held between those departments that had not yet responded to the committee's request for a preliminary plan, and individual members of the committee.

Once a department had submitted a plan, the chair of the Assessment Committee and the Dean of Academic Affairs met with the committee member responsible for that division to review the plan. After noting strengths and weaknesses, the faculty representative contacted the chair of the department in question, and explained the Committee's comments and suggestions.

Each department submitted a plan with two parts. The first part described the goals that the department had set for its majors. The second part consisted of the method(s) by which the department could assess these goals. The goals varied from preparing students for graduate school, to preparing them for a profession directly after graduation, to providing a general liberal arts orientation. Some departments added a liberal arts dimension to a professional major through encouragement of a second major.

The Committee decided to encourage each department to develop its own unique approach to assessment. Therefore, there was no attempt to present a model or suggest a structure for assessment, other than the guidelines laid down by North Central. As one might expect, the various departments developed plans tailored to their academic programs. Departments used multiple measures including the following: the portfolio method by which the majors would keep all papers written within the major department for review in the senior year; evaluation of student performance in the capstone course; written or oral exit interviews or exit exams; and follow-up studies of student satisfaction and performance one to five years after graduation.

When departments were designing their own exit exams, sample questions were often submitted with the plans so the Committee could compare the questions with the department goals. In some cases the questions were numerous and detailed. In others they were very broad but directed at eliciting from the student an essay that revealed the student's ability to deal with the issues that are inherent in that particular discipline.

The Committee was satisfied that each department met the basic requirements of evaluating goals that are appropriate to that discipline. It is expected, however, that as departments implement their assessment programs during the 1995-96 academic year, they will revise their procedures. The Committee members will revisit the departments to provide continued support and assistance during the implementation of the plan. Reports of the departmental assessments will be collected by the Assessment Committee on a biennial basis beginning in the spring semester 1997.

Assessment of General Education: Distribution Requirements

Ohio Wesleyan, like other liberal arts institutions, specifies a set of general education goals for its students. Because the academic departments at Ohio Wesleyan are distinctive and highly individualistic, our general education requirements emphasize departments over distributional areas. Students satisfy some of their general education requirements by taking a specified number and combination of courses within four academic areas into which Ohio Wesleyan courses are apportioned: arts, humanities, natural sciences, and social sciences. The criteria are not uniform among areas and the number of course combinations by which students may satisfy these distribution requirements is virtually infinite; the task of assessing general education outcomes, therefore, must lie with individual departments.

After preliminary Assessment Committee discussion, a memorandum was sent to department chairs requesting their cooperation in preparing assessment plans for their distribution courses. Departments were given flexibility to design their plans around specific courses or general departmental objectives; similarly, departments determined the relative emphasis upon content vs. skills. Reactions to the request varied widely; some departments readily submitted plans, while others responded with lengthy lists of questions and concerns. Questions ran the gamut from practical (How many students will be involved each year?) to theoretical (Is assessment appropriate in a liberal arts institution?). Assessment Committee representatives (all faculty members) talked with department members, acting as sounding boards, offering suggestions, and conveying questions to the full Committee. An interactive process of preparing the plans thus evolved between departments and the Assessment Committee; the Committee's design for assessment of distribution requirements reflects this interaction.

Assessment plans for distribution requirements were received from all departments, and every one reflects the uniqueness of the department submitting it. Each departmental plan included a statement of objectives for the distribution requirements; an assessment instrument, usually in the form of a series of questions; and a statement of how the assessment outcomes will influence curricular reform in the department. In some departments, assessment will take the form of an exit interview; in others, written responses to questions will be obtained.

Assessment of distribution requirements is being phased in, beginning with a pilot assessment during the 1995-96 academic year. The Pilot Program will target the departments with faculty members on the Assessment Committee: botany-microbiology, fine arts, geography, psychology, and religion. Thus, the Committee will have an opportunity to study questions such as: What are appropriate sample sizes? When should the assessment be administered? Who should administer the assessments? Who will evaluate the responses?

Beginning with the 1996-97 academic year, assessments will be conducted each year within one of the four distribution areas. Under this timetable, distribution requirements in all departments will undergo assessment, but only once every four years. The Assessment Committee will monitor the progress of the program, and continue to solicit suggestions from faculty as to how the process might be improved.

Conclusion

Faculty ownership and involvement were perhaps the most important factors in the faculty's accepting and approving assessment in general and the Assessment Plan in particular. The faculty authorized a standing committee to develop and implement the Plan. That committee is prepared to assess both departmental programs and general education requirements.

Frequent communication between the Assessment Committee and all faculty members is a crucial part of the Plan. The committee reports to, and seeks advice and counsel from, departments, divisions, and the faculty as a whole, as well as the Academic Policy Committee, the committee that oversees the curriculum. Individual members of the committee also communicate with departments and programs.

Although the Assessment Committee will coordinate assessment efforts, most actual assessment will be undertaken by faculty within departments, programs, and divisions. Thus all faculty members will play a role in assessment. This extensive participation will help to ensure that assessment will become an organic part of the faculty enterprise, rather than an administrative or external imposition.

* Because the Assessment Committee treated departments and programs alike, "department" refers to both programs and departments.

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Broadening Faculty Approaches to Assessing Student Academic Achievement

Stephen A. Yachanin

It has been the author's experience most faculty support the evaluation of student academic achievement. Those with whom the author has worked acknowledge the importance of such evaluation for assigning grades, altering the way in which course material is presented, revising curricula, and monitoring the integrity of college degrees. There are moans and groans regarding the additional work involved in assessing student achievement, but those are often muffled by the potential for improvement.

The phrase "developing measuring instruments for assessment," however, seems to raise considerable alarm and confusion among faculty. Questions such as, "How do you measure an attitude?" or "How can you know if a student has developed an appreciation for (insert whatever you choose)?" are common, as are blanket statements regarding the impossibility of measuring such things. Others react defensively, emphasizing the value of "tests and term papers" as adequate methods of assessing student achievement, and see no reason in spending time considering alternative methods of assessment.

The author regards such views as the result of a misunderstanding of the nature of measurement and a learned myopia concerning the assessment of student academic achievement. While a wide range of assessment strategies and tasks are used on campuses across the country (e.g., case studies, role-playing, senior research projects, portfolios), these strategies and tasks are not commonly used across all disciplines. Rather, the methods of assessment used by our professors are likely to be used by us to assess our students. In that way, faculty within a particular discipline may find it difficult to consider assessment strategies or tasks less commonly used in their discipline. It was from that position that a workshop was created to assist faculty in developing a better understanding of measurement and a greater awareness of measurement strategies and tasks.

With the assistance and encouragement of the Dean of the College, the author identified three faculty members who were dynamic speakers, viewed as leaders by their colleagues, and not entirely "sold" on the idea of assessment as mandated by the North Central Association. Those faculty and the College's Associate Deans participated in a pilot workshop for which the author served as facilitator.

Pilot Workshop

An abridged set of goals and "criteria for success" (i.e., facts of knowledge students should acquire, abilities or skills students should demonstrate or perform, real-world experiences students should encounter, and issues upon which students should reflect, all of which are used to describe successful achievement of a goal) for our Legal Assistant major was provided without any indication how student achievement of each goal and criterion was to be assessed. The Legal Assistant goals and criteria were chosen because none of the participants were familiar with the area. It was expected the lack of background would free the participants from any preconceived ideas of how one *should* evaluate student achievement in that area.

The facilitator began with a brief description regarding the nature of the task. Participants were asked to begin formulating assessment strategies and tasks by which students might be evaluated in light of each goal and criterion. In addition, several commonly used means of assessment were mentioned (e.g., objective tests, term papers, etc.) to initiate the discussion and to challenge the participants to consider less common and, hopefully, more creative approaches.

Given the diversity of the participants and unfamiliarity of the Legal Assistant area, several approaches commonly used by each participant, yet less familiar to the others, were suggested and considered. Sharing approaches to assessment common in one area had the affect of stimulating thoughts of how that approach might be applied in another area less likely to use such an approach. For example, a Fine Arts faculty member suggested a performance-based strategy (a common approach in the fine arts) might be used to assess communication skills in a courtroom setting in which students acted various courtroom roles (e.g., defense and prosecuting attorneys). A second faculty member (in Psychology) recognized such an approach could easily be used to enhance and assess students' clinical diagnostic skills. Some students might role play clients with various psychological disorders while other students could act as clinicians. A simple checklist of correctly identified symptoms manifested by the student-clients could be recorded as well as the accuracy of the final diagnosis made by the student-clinicians.

All assessment strategies and tasks developed by the participants were summarized and recorded by the facilitator throughout the workshop. The pilot workshop lasted approximately one hour. Feedback from the participants provided several useful suggestions that were incorporated in a subsequent faculty workshop.

Faculty Workshop

The three faculty members who had participated in the pilot workshop served as facilitators for a second workshop in which all members of the faculty participated. Each facilitator conducted a mini assessment workshop for approximately ten colleagues as part of a faculty workshop held prior to the beginning of Fall 1995 Semester classes.

The Legal Assistant, Biology, and Psychology majors were selected as the topics for small group discussion. Each member of the faculty was assigned to one of the groups by the author to ensure no faculty within those majors were placed within the group that was to consider that major, as well as to create a diverse composition for each group.

An abridged set of goals and criteria for success for a major was provided to each member of a group. Members of each discussion group were instructed to develop assessment strategies and tasks for the goals and criteria given. The degree of specificity of development of strategies and tasks was left for each group to determine.

All members of the faculty met to discuss the results of their efforts at the completion of the small group sessions. A spokesperson for each group presented a list of assessment strategies and tasks developed by their group and shared comments regarding the nature of assessing student academic achievement in general.

The Aftermath

Most participants found the exercise interesting and informative. Some remained skeptical, feeling more comfortable with the methods of assessment more commonly used in their disciplines. Many, however, found developing assessment strategies for a discipline other than their own allowed them to approach assessment with a fresh perspective and discuss strategies they would not readily consider for use in assessing their own discipline. Several faculty members privately indicated to the author they planned to "steal" some of the ideas presented for use in assessing students in their discipline.

Change is difficult. Innovation is exciting. Broadening faculty approaches to assessing student academic achievement might best occur by providing an environment in which faculty can discover for themselves how assessment strategies used in other disciplines might be applied in their own. There is perhaps no better way to achieve that than by assembling faculty from diverse disciplines and encourage each to share how they assess students. You can almost hear the gears turning in the heads of the others as they consider how they might use each approach as it is presented.

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Designing and Implementing a Faculty-Driven Assessment Process

Kathy Crall
Mike Delaney
Jolyne Ghanatabadi

Des Moines Area Community College, a multi-campus college, is the largest of fifteen community colleges in Iowa with an enrollment of more than 10,000 FTE (full-time equivalent) credit students.

The process of preparing for the development of a formalized assessment process began in the fall of 1991. It was mutually agreed between faculty and administration that in order for assessment to be successful, it must be a faculty-driven process.

A cadre of twenty-two faculty members representing instructional areas from all four campuses, along with two continuing education coordinators, two deans, a curriculum specialist, and the chief academic officer were given the charge to develop a plan for assessing student academic achievement. This cadre was lead by a steering committee composed of five faculty members, a curriculum specialist, a dean, and the chief academic officer. Two years later the committee was expanded to include eleven additional faculty members and two additional deans.

A process was initiated that would facilitate the communication of the results of the cadre's work to all faculty. The results of the cadre's meetings were communicated to other faculty and administrators on a regular basis to permit review, reaction, feedback, and possible modification.

As a result of the cadre's work, the Des Moines Area Community College's Educational Model for Continuous Quality Improvement shown on the next page was developed. The model features a process that incorporates aspects of total quality management for continuous improvement through constant self-review and analysis.

The model has, as a foundation, a continuous or cyclical process based on the total quality concept. The Shewhart Cycle—PLAN, DO, CHECK, ACT, from the Deming Management Model (1986) by Mary Walton—is the backdrop for the process.

☐ **Plan**

In this phase, the cadre began by developing a philosophy, defining terms, and designing the process to be used for writing competencies and subcompetencies for the skills and knowledge students should acquire as a result of completing a course or program of study. Competencies and subcompetencies for each course and program of study were identified and written by faculty, with input from and consultation with administrators, advisory committees, individuals from business and industry, and other stakeholders.

☐ **Do**

In the DO phase, students are made aware of the college's competency-based curriculum when it is explained at new-student orientation sessions. Course competencies and subcompetencies are required to be distributed to students by instructors as a part of, or in addition to, their course syllabi. A central computer file on the LAN (local area network) was created so that students and staff could readily access course and program competencies.

☐ Check

The CHECK phase of the process includes a series of assessment activities, all directed at students at various stages of the educational process at Des Moines Area Community College: Pre-DMACC Assessment, Student Course Assessment, Program Competency Assessment, and Post-DMACC Assessment. The traditional methods of student assessment, used by most instructors, were examined to determine if they adequately measure student achievement. While many students respond well to traditional methods of assessment, not all students do; therefore, alternative assessment techniques, such as capstone projects and courses, and portfolios were integrated in plans prepared by faculty to assess student academic achievement.

A summary of assessment techniques used for each level at DMACC are shown in the table below.

Assessment Summary Table

Phase	Technique	
Pre-Assessment (For all students)	– ACT/SAT – ASSET – Other	– Previous college credit – High School articulation
Student Course Assessment	– Capstone project – Classroom assessment techniques (CAT) – Oral report – Other	– Group work – Simulation – Interviews – Tests – Daily assignments

A comprehensive program evaluation process is also used in this phase.

☐ Act

The ACT phase is that part of the process in which benchmarks established in the CHECK phase are analyzed to determine the implications for teaching and learning. Once the analysis is completed, the model has gone full circle, feedback has occurred, and the results of the analysis are used to plan, thus starting the process all over again.

Conclusion

Des Moines Area Community College's Educational Model for Continuous Quality Improvement, developed and implemented by faculty, has linked student academic achievement, program evaluation, and strategic planning. It has also brought about improved communications of faculty between the campuses and lead to improvements in the teaching/learning process.

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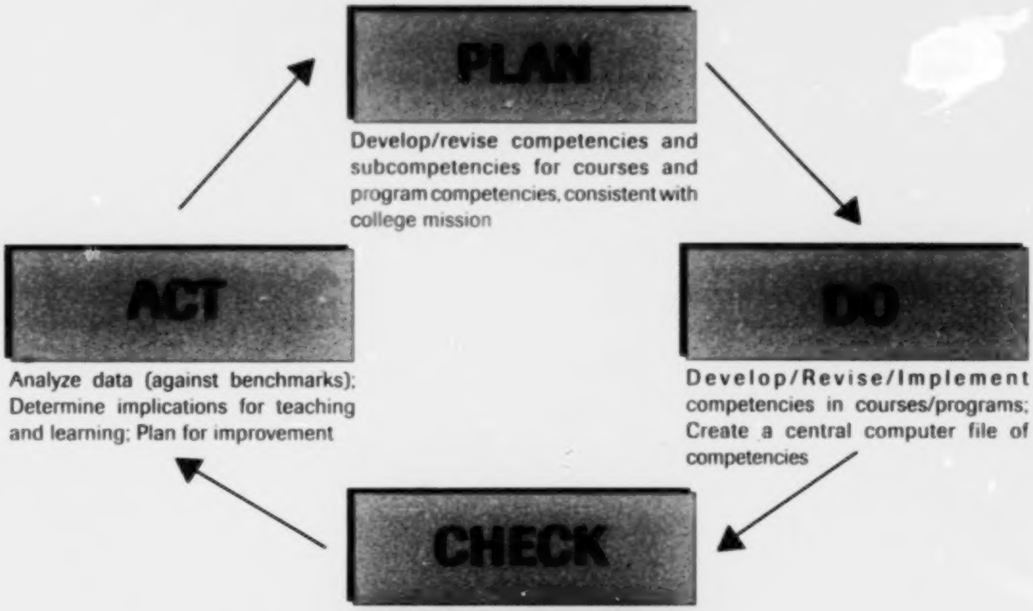
DMACC Educational Improvement Model for Continuous Quality Improvement



PLAN

Develop/revise competencies and subcompetencies for courses and program competencies, consistent with college mission

DO

Develop/Revise/Implement competencies in courses/programs; Create a central computer file of competencies

CHECK

ACT

Analyze data (against benchmarks); Determine implications for teaching and learning; Plan for improvement

Pre-DMACC Assessment

- ACT/SAT
- ASSET
- Admissions/Advising
- High school articulation
- Previous college experience
- Other

Student Competency Assessment

- Assignments
- Attendance/Participation
- Capstone projects
- Group work
- In-class feedback/Simulation
- Interviews
- Internships
- Labs
- Oral reports
- Portfolios
- Tests
- Written reports
- Other

Program Assessment

General

- Advisory committees
- Agency accreditation
- Articulation
- Competencies courses matrix
- Exit exam
- Faculty professional involvement
- Professional development
- Resources (equipment, software, etc.)
- Student satisfaction

Competencies

- Exit exam
- Capstone course/project
- Portfolios

Post-DMACC Assessment

- Employer survey
- Focus group
- Graduate survey
- State licensure exams
- Transfer student performance
- Other

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1996

Chapter IX

From Self-Study to Site Visit: Case Studies

Fourteen Critical Choices to Make in Beginning the Self-Study Process

David A. Nichols

This essay is designed to provide a practical guide, based on the Southwestern College experience, to important choices in beginning a self-study for a small college. These choices reflect the truth of that old Chinese proverb: "The journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step." Identifying that single step and taking it, rather than being overwhelmed by the long trip, is essential to launching a successful self-study process.

☐ Choice 1: Allowing Enough Time vs. Being Rushed

Set up a calendar that allows a minimum of two years for the self-study process—one year for study and one year for reaching and writing up conclusions. Aim to produce a draft document six months in advance of its mailing deadline, eight months in advance of the North Central team's scheduled visit. That leaves sixteen months, with only a portion of that available for real self-study by the time vacations and summers are eliminated.

The two years is an absolute minimum. Even that period will work only if your institutional mission and purposes are already well defined. Southwestern's review really began four years in advance with the development of our institutional statements. We are already preparing for our next review in 2001. The opening session of our January 1996 faculty workshop was entitled: "The North Central report of 2001."

☐ Choice 2: Utilizing the North Central Staff vs. Operating in Isolation

Work closely and continually with your staff person in the North Central office. One of the most important things we did at Southwestern College was to consciously decide to do that. We were frequently on the phone, asking questions. In September of 1993, a year and a half before our review, we invited NCA staff liaison Mary Breslin to visit our campus. That visit was a critically important event in making our self-study successful.

☐ Choice 3: A Separate Self-Study Structure vs. an Integrated Structure

You need to select a coordinator, with some released time for the task, and North Central will expect you to have a self-study steering committee. An easy way to staff this committee is to utilize the chairs of your work groups.

However, the critical question is, "How should the work groups be structured?" You must decide whether to have a separate, special self-study structure or use the existing governance structure.

In 1992, Southwestern had just implemented a new faculty committee structure. For us, it made sense to reinforce the new structure with self-study assignments rather than drain energies into a separate structure. The purpose was to build self-study into the fabric of the college's life. In a small college, keep it simple. Most small colleges do not have the human resources to staff a dual structure.

Strategic Directions for Southwestern College, 1992-96

- Establish a relevant academic program shaped by Christian values and create standards for excellence in teaching and learning.
- Revitalize the residential campus, strengthen community, and increase the number of residential students.
- Balance liberal learning with professional programming, expand career-focused recruitment, and strengthen programs for the emerging learning society.
- Create an era-appropriate, aesthetically pleasing campus.
- Institute policies for long-term financial viability, manage endowment assets to enhance program, and seek gifts for major capital improvements.
- Simplify all organizational structures and nurture an institutional style of experimentation and innovation.

☐ Choice 4: Faculty Involvement vs. Other Groups

You cannot conduct a successful self-study without deep faculty involvement. The accreditation process is largely faculty centered. Faculty involvement should take at least three forms—work groups, surveys, and workshops. Faculty must know the issues so well that, when the North Central team visits, they will say the same things whether or not administrators are in the room.

Therefore, a first-step task is to explicitly plan the means by which faculty input will be gathered. Other groups are certainly important—especially trustees. Students, alumni, and staff must be surveyed. However, the heartbeat of the self-study is working with the faculty. They, like no other group, can make or break your review when they meet with your North Central evaluation team.

☐ Choice 5: Mission vs. Purposes

For those to whom self-study is a new experience, it is easy to confuse the college's mission statement with its purposes. The North Central criteria focus on the word, "purposes." At most institutions, these are the components of the strategic plan and the detailed steps that implement that plan. These detailed purposes, and how well you are fulfilling them, are the core of the self-study. For Southwestern College, six strategic directions formed the basis for our self-study, our analysis of strengths and weaknesses, and the organization of our self-study document.

☐ Choice 6: Criteria vs. Purposes

Start with your purposes, not the Criteria for Accreditation. While your ultimate aim is to please a visiting team, you will never achieve that goal by a myopically focusing on the five criteria that they will apply in their visit. *The self-study must begin where your institution is, not where North Central is*—although knowing North Central's expectations is obviously important.

The criteria always point back to your purposes. They are to be applied to the institution's stated purposes and its organization for fulfilling them, its current success in meeting them, its ability to fulfill those purposes in the future, and whether those purposes have been implemented with integrity.

This has implications for organizing work groups. At first, organizing work groups around the five criteria will seem logical. Be careful. The criteria are not really five separate items. A case can be made for organizing work groups around the issues for your college in fulfilling your purposes. Moving from the concrete (your college's issues) to the abstract (the criteria) will be easier for inexperienced work groups than vice versa. Then, as the issues surrounding the fulfillment of your purposes are clarified, an awareness of the criteria can be increased and obvious gaps can be addressed.

☐ Choice 7: Interpreting Criterion Five as Everything vs. a Few Important Things

The criteria still matter. Criterion Five, in particular, presents some unique problems. "What are the integrity issues for our college?" When we first turned this question over to a committee, confusion was the result. We initially concluded that practically everything had something to do with integrity.

The way to deal with Criterion Five is to choose a few things that are at the core of your institutional life. Make it the vehicle for addressing your deepest, most sensitive issues. For Southwestern, we narrowed these down to the integrity of our key publications (doing what we say we do), our pronouncements and performance in diversity, our fulfillment of stated central values (academic integrity and Christian values), and the integrity of our relationships with primary constituencies.

☐ Choice 8: History Lesson vs. Snapshot

A hot topic at the beginning of Southwestern's self-study process was whether our study (and therefore our document) should be a snapshot of where we were at that moment or an analysis of the changes that had taken place since the last North Central review. The answer will differ for different institutions. Southwestern, as a consequence of unusually dramatic changes since the previous review, chose to focus on change. Any adequate self-study must do both but the emphasis will swing on the tone of the previous visiting team's report.

☐ Choice 9: Strengths vs. Weaknesses

Beware of conducting a self-study that is only problem-centered. "Catching somebody doing something right" is important to building the morale and self-confidence essential to addressing the harder, unresolved issues.

A solid self-study identifies both strengths and weaknesses. Be honest with yourselves and with North Central. If your institution has a weakness that has not been corrected, the worst thing you can do is attempt to cover it up. Identify it and take some initial steps to address it even if the full results won't be available by the time the team visits. There is nothing wrong with having an issue in process if you are actively addressing it. Just be certain that you, not the visiting team, are the first to point it out.

☐ Choice 10: A Data Deluge vs. a Few Good Pieces of Data

If your institution is not accustomed to consistently collecting data for self-study purposes, you can fall into another "everything" trap. Decide, with precision, what information you most need and whom can you survey to get it.

Anecdotes, of course, are not data. North Central evaluators will expect to see some graphs and charts in your document. However, select a few and do them well. Be sure they address core questions, not trivial matters. Focus on your stated purposes. Beware of wearing everyone out with data collection that appears trivial or meaningless to those who are involved.

☐ Choice 11: Keeping Good Records Right Now vs. Trying to Catch Up

Many institutions fall into bad habits in keeping records. If your governing bodies have not kept consistent minutes, don't waste time attempting to retrieve or recreate these.

Take a "from this moment on" approach. Start immediately making certain that minutes are kept and syllabi are collected. If you have allowed at least two (preferably three) years before your team's visit, you will build an adequate record for accreditation review purposes. If recordkeeping has been a weakness, make your new commitment to good records a benchmark of progress in your self-study.

☐ Choice 12: Planning Assessment vs. Doing It

The single-step approach can also help with assessment. Our college had no coherent assessment program. We had to begin somewhere. We chose to deal initially with a limited group—first-time, full-time freshmen and the general education program provided for them. Then we decided to administer a very few tests that could be repeated at later stages in the students' college careers. Only later did we get around to working on assessment programs in particular majors and activities. We are still working on these more detailed assessment issues.

By the time our North Central team arrived, we had very little assessment data. However, we had a written plan and we had taken the first steps to implement that plan.

☐ Choice 13: A Complex, Single-Person Document vs. a Clear, "Owned" Document

You will not write your self-study document right away but it is important to have a vision of what kind of document you are building toward. Be sure to inspect some documents from successful colleges.

Decide in advance to make the document's organization simple and clear. If in doubt, using the five Criteria for Accreditation as an organizational scheme will make sense to your evaluation team. Use lots of bold headings and break up long text material so that the conclusions are easy to find. Make it easy to scan. While most consultant-evaluators will read your self-study in advance, visualize a document that is so easy to read that a weary, harried team member can readily review it on the plane trip to your campus.

This all underlines the crucial importance of the document. The self-study document will shape the initial conclusions of your evaluation team. The visiting team, in two-three days, can only hope to "clarify and verify" what is in the document. That means that the team will reach major, even if tentative, conclusions before arriving on campus.

However, beware of responding to this reality by sending a superior writer into seclusion to write a piece of interesting non-fiction. The first audience, even prior to the evaluation team, is your own institution. Your colleagues must "own" the document. They should be able to recognize their work in its pages and see it as a faithful reflection of the self-study process. Otherwise, the team will not be able to verify its conclusions.

☐ Choice 14: Problems vs. Opportunities

Above all, as you begin, recognize that the self-study is an opportunity, not a problem, for your institution. The self-study's fundamental purpose is to serve your institution, not North Central. This means that even weaknesses that are uncovered provide an opportunity for constructive change and can be portrayed as such to your evaluation team.

The core issues are your college's purposes and your fulfillment of those purposes. Address those directly, honestly, and in a highly participatory, data-driven fashion. Then the accreditation criteria will make sense. More important, your evaluation team will conclude that you have taken the self-study process seriously. That is probably the single most important conclusion you want them to reach.

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From Self-Study to Site Visit and Beyond: A Case Study of the Reaccreditation Process at a Research I State University

Andrew P. Debicki
Jeannette A. Johnson

Getting Started

At a relatively stable institution like the University of Kansas, which has been accredited since 1913, planning for a reaccreditation visit is likely to have a relatively low profile for most of the years between visits. In the absence of major upheavals or significant changes in mission, we are not as institutions generally given to introspection. We know that we will be considered for reaccreditation in two years, or three, dutifully note the year in our institutional tickler file, and go on with our normal business.

All of that changes about two years prior to the time of the site visit, when the president or chancellor receives a letter from the North Central Association asking that prospective dates for a site visit be selected. Reality sets in and the complexities of the accreditation process begin to unfold. It gradually becomes apparent that planning and successfully executing the ten-year accreditation review at a large research I state university will require a great deal of work and much attention to detail.

Even the first step, identifying prospective dates for the site visit, can be complicated. The NCA guidelines for selecting dates and suggestions about dates to avoid are excellent starting points. Also important are a careful review of the institutional calendar, including scheduled cultural and athletic events, and attention to the particular characteristics of the institution and its location. Try to avoid dates that are either early or very late in the academic term. Faculty, staff, and students are likely to more hospitable to consultant-evaluators if they are well settled into the term but are not yet facing the pressures of exam time. If snowy or rainy weather severely affects access to your campus or community, select dates when the weather will probably be good. As soon as you have NCA's confirmation of your site visit dates, inform administrative and academic offices and put the dates on the institutional calendar.

Developing the Self-Study

With a team visit scheduled for October 1994, the University of Kansas began preparation by reviewing the 1984 self-study and evaluation team report, and the invaluable retrospective notes left by the 1984 Self-Study Coordinator. The steering committee was appointed in February of 1993. The timing proved to be just sufficient, as some parts of the process inevitably took longer than anticipated. In the summer of 1993, we hosted a campus visit by our NCA staff liaison; decided to organize our self-study by the five Criteria for Accreditation, with detailed information about the university's academic and research programs in Criterion Three; appointed writing committees for Criteria Three and Five; assigned principal responsibility for writing other sections to senior staff members; and set the timetable.

The University of Kansas, along with other institutions governed by the Kansas Board of Regents, had undertaken a comprehensive and time-consuming review of all programs in 1992. We decided to build the self-study on the data and results of that review and to use the expertise of those involved in it. The decision proved wise, as it enabled us to avoid duplication of effort and to build upon the goals and initiatives established previously.

We spent the 1993-1994 academic year writing and collating the drafts of all sections. Editing the material, ensuring consistency and fit among the sections, and reorganizing some sections as we developed a better understanding of the criteria, took much longer than expected. Our decision to keep the report short (200-some pages) required much editing and pruning but resulted in a cohesive, readable text.

We have been asked several times about our preparation of the section that deals with the "new" Criterion Five, "The institution demonstrates integrity in its practices and relationships." We appointed a committee that included key individuals who deal often with issues of integrity: the Associate Director of Affirmative Action, the University Ombudsman, the Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, the President of the Classified Senate, a senior faculty member with long experience in governance and tenure issues, an Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, and the Associate Director of University Relations, a professional writer with extensive university experience.

We initially had anticipated that this committee would function like the Criterion Three committee, with writing assignments shared among its members. In the end, however, the committee used several meetings to chart issues that should be included, and then assigned the Associate Director of University Relations to draft the chapter. She taped committee discussions and interviews with other administrators (e.g., the Acting Director of Human Resources) and prepared a 20-page draft, which was reviewed first by the Criterion Five committee and then by others, including the steering committee and senior administrators.

Although this approach varied from our original plan, we strongly recommend it for this and some other sections. Having a committee identify the principal issues and then assigning a single experienced writer to construct the chapter resulted in an integrated and well-balanced text that served as a standard for other chapters. We borrowed from this model to finalize the text for the chapter on Criterion Four, "The institution can continue to accomplish its purposes and strengthen its educational effectiveness." In that case, steering committee staff members prepared an outline of issues and challenges facing the university, scheduled a meeting with senior administrators, and taped the discussion. The model would have been effective (and efficient) for several other chapters, although it probably would not have worked for our Criterion Three chapter, which included the substantive narrative sections on all our schools and units. In that chapter, the more complex—and far more time consuming—approach of having different individuals produce texts on their units, and then integrating and editing the texts, was probably inevitable.

Moving from self-study draft to final report was more challenging than we had anticipated and added significantly to the workloads of the staff who assisted the steering committee. We had identified a gifted staff writer to edit the final draft, and he deserves much credit for the readability of the final product. However, we complicated his task by bringing him into the process too early, when some chapters were still in rough form.

Publicizing the Accreditation Process

KU is a public university with a strong tradition of faculty, student, and staff involvement in institutional governance and is accustomed to close scrutiny. We began to publicize the self-study and accreditation process as soon as the steering committee had been appointed. The steering committee and the writing committees included members from many parts of the university, and they periodically informed their constituencies of our progress. Periodic news releases and articles in the biweekly publication for faculty and staff provided updates to the larger community. Governance groups as well as administrative offices were invited to comment on the final draft of the self-study and several copies were placed on reserve in the University Libraries. The final Self-Study Report was distributed widely across campus and administrators were asked to make copies available to faculty and staff in their units. Again, copies were placed in the libraries.

Schedules and other materials about the site visit were distributed to participants, and open forums provided an opportunity for members of the faculty, staff, and students to meet with team members. When the team report had been finalized and our reaccreditation for a ten-year period had been formally approved by the NCA, we sent copies of the report to the Board of Regents and administrative offices, put copies on reserve in the libraries, prepared a five-page summary that the Chancellor transmitted to university administrators and governance leaders, and issued a press release.

Despite our ongoing efforts to communicate about the accreditation process, there are probably many members of the university community who remained blissfully unaware of it. We believe, nonetheless, that the open approach we adopted served us well.

Preparing for the Site Visit

We are convinced that thorough preparation for the site visit is as important to the outcome as the earlier process of crafting the self-study document. Planning for the team visit should begin as soon as the NCA office begins to put the team together. The NCA staff contact should be encouraged to suggest the name of the potential chair as early as possible, and preferably five or six months ahead of the visit. We had anticipated that the chair would be a senior administrator from a large public institution like ours. However, the NCA suggested an executive vice president from a private institution who had extensive experience in accreditation reviews and who came highly recommended. We concurred, and to our good fortune. His breadth of experience, and the fact that he knew every part of a university (since all reported to him at his home institution), allowed him to deal knowledgeably with every issue and to use team members effectively and judiciously.

The role that the team chair plays in the success of the process and the visit can hardly be overestimated. He or she arranges the schedule, determining which team members will have responsibility for evaluating various sectors of the university. The chair also makes the writing assignments for team members and has major responsibility for the final report. In general, we believe it is important for a research institution to have as team chair someone with broad administrative experience.

At an institution of our size, which requires a team of fourteen, it is very important to have NCA identify prospective team members as soon as possible. We listed several areas in which we felt that it was important to have representation: professional schools that had not recently undergone specialized accreditations, areas of particular emphasis within our University, key administrative sectors. We expressed a preference for experienced senior administrators.

Once NCA has suggested prospective consultant-evaluators, it is important to review the list quickly in order to make sure that no conflicts of interest exist, and to signal approval or requests for changes immediately so that NCA can give the team members sufficient advance notice. We know that several experienced CE's were unable to participate in our site visit because of prior commitments. It can be difficult for NCA to assemble a team as large and diverse as ours. As time passed, our NCA staff liaison asked us to suggest possible team members or institutions with strength in particular areas and used our suggestions to complete the team.

We strongly recommend that the team chair be invited to visit the campus six to eight weeks prior to the team visit. The visit provides an opportunity for the chair to inspect all the facilities that will be used, to make suggestions about additions or changes, and to meet with the steering committee chair and key staff to develop a first draft of the schedule for the visit. That meeting should include the secretarial or administrative staff member(s) who will serve as the team's principal support staff during the visit and will be responsible for logistical arrangements.

Following the chair's campus visit, the schedule can be refined to include appointments of individual team members with administrators, faculty, staff, students, and others. In the weeks preceding the site visit, drafts can be faxed back and forth between the team chair and the steering committee chair. The schedule is the team chair's prerogative, but we found our chair was most grateful for suggestions. At a large university, it is helpful to have the schedule largely in place, with appointments confirmed, by the time the team arrives. Campus personnel (especially deans' secretaries) need to be alerted well in advance so that they can hold calendars open for team members' visits. During their two and one-half day visit to our campus, team members met with more than 250 people. Clearly, support staff play a critical role in planning and executing a schedule that is so complex. It is helpful for both team members and university representatives to have information about the people they will be meeting. We used the vitae provided by NCA to prepare one-page resumes on each team member and shared these with university colleagues. We also provided team members with a comprehensive list of university people involved in the visit, including names, titles, office locations, and phone numbers.

Setting up the resource room(s) for the evaluation team deserves careful attention. Ideally, there should be two: one on campus for use during the day and another in the team's hotel for evening use. Duplicating the principal exhibits for the hotel resource room would avoid having to cart materials back and forth (as we did on one occasion). All materials should be labeled and filed with care, and the support staff members assigned to work with the team should be familiar with the system. We used the term "appendix" for information included in the self-study document itself; "exhibit" for materials cited specifically in the document but placed in the resource room (these included reports, manuals, handbooks, policy documents, etc.); and "auxiliary exhibit" for other materials placed in the resource room (including degree inventories, state statutes, financial reports and legislative requests, basic institutional data, catalogues, timetables). The resource room also included accreditation reports and publications for individual schools and units.

We installed several computers in our resource room and several more in the hotel; DOS Word Perfect was available on IBM-compatible machines, and Microsoft Word on Macintosh computers. However, many team members brought their own laptops and we might have saved some installation time if we had surveyed each member in advance to determine computing needs.

Having participated in developing the schedule, we knew that team members would be extremely busy during their stay with us. One of our goals, therefore, was to ensure that transportation, lodging, and hospitality arrangements were as convenient and comfortable as possible. We asked team members to provide advance information about special dietary or other needs. Airport pickup should be carefully planned, with no more than two or three members picked up by one host (to avoid delays for a whole group when one plane is late). We asked members of the steering committee and other senior administrators and faculty to volunteer for these assignments because they are knowledgeable about the university and the accreditation process and would be able to answer team members' questions. Team members who arrived by car received campus and community maps and detailed directions.

Hotel accommodations should be as good, and as close to campus, as possible. Cars and drivers must be available to escort team members to and from campus. Our campus is large and, being sited on a hill, has somewhat confusing topography. Faculty and staff members were asked to escort team members from one appointment to another. Although some team members preferred to be on their own, most appreciated their guides, especially on the first day. We also found it is useful to have additional staff or faculty "on call" to deal with unexpected hitches and emergencies.

Finally, flexibility is important. No matter how carefully you have planned, you are likely to have some surprises—plane delays, unexpected requests for data that no one on the steering committee had thought would be of interest. Meet such requests gracefully and expeditiously, even if they are baffling. And don't underestimate the people factor. We were shameless in our efforts to recruit as support staff and university hosts colleagues who have strong interpersonal skills and positive attitudes, are good at their work, and are familiar with the University. We included faculty, administrative assistants, writers, secretaries, deans and associate deans, and students. In our view, these informal contacts played an important role in communicating our institutional values and goals.

Moving Towards Continued Accreditation and Preparing for the Next Cycle

Our site visit was in mid-October of 1994. By November, the University had the team's thorough and thoughtful draft report. We attribute the rapid turnaround to the excellent leadership of our team chair and the sound work ethic of team members. Despite the complexity of our institution, the report contained very few errors of fact, so the university was able to complete its review of the draft and provide a response in December. NCA forwarded the final report to us in January 1995, with the option of selecting either a Readers' Panel or a Review Committee as the next step in the review process. As we had no significant differences with the content of the final report, we chose the Readers' Panel. On February 28, 1995, NCA wrote to inform the Chancellor that the commission had acted to continue the university's accreditation and to schedule the next comprehensive evaluation in ten years.

Having received formal notice of continued accreditation, we communicated the outcome through the processes described above (distribution of the final report, a summary of the report, and news releases). In forwarding the summary to members of the university community, the Chancellor spoke with pride about the obvious strengths of the university and asked that special attention be given to the areas of concern cited by the evaluation team, as the institution will be called upon to provide evidence of progress in those areas when it next faces reaccreditation.

We know that the ten years between accreditation seem to pass very quickly. However, given the pressures that higher education faces today, it is possible that our institution, and the constituencies we serve, will change significantly during the next decade. In the current educational climate, it will be a real challenge to build upon the strengths and to address the areas of concern cited in the 1994 report.

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Chapter X

The Role and Responsibilities of the Self-Study Coordinator

Keeping the Self-Study On Track

Philip J. Brookes

Anyone concerned with keeping an institutional self-study on track plainly must believe there are reasons to fear its derailment. And, indeed, if my experience with two ten-year comprehensive reviews and two focused reviews is typical, such concerns are realistic. They are borne out, moreover, by the experiences of other Self-Study Coordinators I have known—some at institutions similar to mine and others at very different places.

Of course, few of us, at any institution, intend or even imagine at the outset that the slings and arrows of outrageous misfortune will so beset us. At the time when we proudly unveil our Self-Study Plans, when our Presidents and Chancellors first announce their undying support for these grand designs, and when every part of the work in prospect appears logical, essential, and well-integrated with all the others, then does the path from Kansas to Oz indeed seem a Yellow Brick Road.

What, then, happens along the way that, like the Wicked Witch of the West, jeopardizes the promised exhilaration of our journey and threatens to leave the highway behind us strewn with discarded drafts, crumpled coffee cups, and empty Tylenol bottles? What are the major disrupters of the tasks and timetables at hand, and how can they be managed?

In nightmarish exaggeration (although they may not seem misproportioned at the time), the following ten calamities may befall you.

1. **The Chief Executive Officer, usually high-viz to a fault, seems, for the purposes of this project, to become invisible.**

   He (or she) intends to remain fully supportive, and almost certainly is, but as other pressures and constituencies assert themselves, an absence of demonstrable CEO involvement in the self-study while other activities publicly claim that attention may create the perception of a special form of lip-service commitment. Increasingly, you feel like you are being kissed over the phone: the original intention may have been good, but meaningful contact just isn't there.

2. **Members of the Steering Committee seem to lose momentum.**

   They may not intend to, but in truth they all have other work to do, and—often at the most critical times—these other responsibilities arise to claim priority. People grow slow to answer the mail. You hold meetings, but fewer and fewer members are able to attend. Among those who do show up, enthusiasm seems to flag. You consider rereading The Godfather in search of underhanded ways of enforcing cooperation.

3. **The campus population at large seems to lose interest.**

   Here again, no one intends negligence in the face of an important undertaking, but the nature of accreditation reviews usually is that a minority of people appointed as a relatively small group inevitably do most of the work because, quite simply, a whole campus cannot serve as a Steering Committee. Consequently, although their support may at first be significant, the interest of the many may wane over time. You begin to feel that, if self-studies were baseball teams, yours would be the Astros.

4. **The Self-Study drafts are enough to give you chills.**

   Text submitted from all over the institution exhibits wildly differing prose styles, a dozen different formats, and a half-dozen different word processors, each with its own manner of graphics and other mechanics. Key sections of the draft are incomplete, and so, once assembled, are seriously out of balance. Some clearly important institutional concerns are glazed over by the campus Pollyannas, while problems of marginal significance are reported by others in Chicken Little rhetoric. Worst of all, much of the writing is less than polished, and some is less than literate. Some parts may be little more than an outline, and some others should have been.

5. **Members of the Steering Committee, and their subordinate authors, use the self-study for therapy.**

You or someone else initially chose them for their surpassing objectivity, intellectual balance, and unfailing good judgment, but as time passes and their submissions roll in, the human frailties of Steering Committee members rise to the surface, of course in the form of subjective, imbalanced misjudgments. Every unfulfilled cause, unresolved issue, or unforgiven slight since the last self-study was conducted threatens to contaminate the text for which you are ultimately responsible.

6. **Your colleagues turn on you.**

Although you became Self-Study Coordinator with the highest of motives, not all of your co-workers recognize your noblesse. Some see you as having sold out to the bureaucrats, others suspect you of self-interested bootlicking, while still others believe simply that you have lost your mind. Especially if you are a teaching faculty member, you are regarded as having gone over to the other side, wherever that is. In your colleagues view, at least, it is wherever the grass looks greener.

7. **Your boss turns on you.**

The demands of professional autonomy disincline faculty to think of themselves as having bosses, and even administrators claim someone they report to rather than a real boss. But the fact is that almost all of us have someone a link or two up the food chain who rates our performance, influences our paycheck, or otherwise abridges our independence. Before these judges, the part-time Self-Study Coordinator is vulnerable for the hours not spent teaching, researching, and servicing his/her department as usual, while the full-time Coordinator at times cannot show enough progress to justify the cushy assignment he/she has temporarily been favored with.

8. **Your family turns on you.**

Happiness, George Burns once remarked, is having a large, loving, caring, close-knit family living in another city. Although well-briefed on the criticality of your Coordinator's role to the continued prosperity of your institution and to the preservation of rational thought in the western world, the members of your family cling with Philistine tenacity to priorities of their own. If you are female, your husband—vain about it when androgyny was fashionable—now cannot find the kitchen, the vacuum cleaner, or the supermarket. If you are male, your wife—usually devoted to the latest in exercise rages—refuses to admit the health benefits of mowing grass or shoveling snow, depending on the season. Your teenagers suddenly have inherited all these myopiae and others, while redefining TV prime-time as any time you need to concentrate and reinventing background music at volumes Beethoven in his dotage could have heard.

9. **You turn on yourself.**

With cumulative weight, these hitherto unimagined insults pile on you, and on no other. It is all your fault; it must be. Suddenly you know the runningness of the long-distance loner: you would flee if you could, but Huck Finn's frontier, as Holden Caulfield found out, is closed, and there is no where to go.

10. **Even the calendar becomes your enemy.**

The time you carefully apportioned for each phase of the project turns out to be insufficient. Holidays, new and unanticipated projects clamoring for attention, and a host of other interruptions professional and personal all squeeze the perfectly reasonable schedule you laid out months ago into a parody of itself. You begin fantasizing about extensions and postponements of your Team's scheduled visit, but the die is cast. And in your private psychodrama of the moment, the cast, you fear, has died. At the very least you are trapped, yet you must do something. But what?

Fortunately, all these problems, daunting as they seem in the aggregate, are at base human in origin. Realizing this, you recall Sartre's bitter observation that "Hell is other people." But more optimistically, you recognize that such problems may also, of their very nature, submit to human solution. At least they may be approached in that spirit. Here, then, are six suggestions that distribute over these hazards, have worked before, and will work again. Some of them require a little anticipation, but most may also be put to work even when the self-study is well under way.

1. Capture the CEO.

This measure is not as difficult as it sounds, since the capturing can be done in print, on tape, or both. Early in the self-study project, script for the institution's top leadership a clear, concise, forceful, and inspiring statement of the importance of the self-study and circulate it as broadly as possible using all the media at your disposal. Publish and republish substantial parts of that message from time to time throughout the project. To some extent, there is nothing like visible, audible support from the top, and once the CEO s commitment has been secured, you can recreate the fact and the appearance of it as needed, even if the speaker is halfway around the world at the time.

2. Keep Steering Committee meetings short and well-focused.

Provide a specific agenda in advance. When possible, hold subcommittee meetings instead. In any case, publish brief, informal minutes of your meetings to keep everyone synchronized, especially those absent from the last get together. Often it is better to hold two separate one-hour meetings, tightly focused and efficient, than one two-hour meeting more diffuse and perhaps less productive. Integrate these meetings into the overall timetable for the self-study, and publish a schedule of future meetings to help attendees work their calendars accordingly. Pat everyone on the back publicly and often. The whole idea is to recognize and accommodate, rather than to contest, the fact of everyone s busy schedules. Doing so turns a committee into a team.

3. Publicize your progress.

The best way to keep the rest of the institution from losing interest in their own self-study is to keep it in front of them. Many tools for doing this are already at hand or easily could be: the campus newspaper and perhaps radio station; faculty senate minutes; alumni organization publications; articles in the local press and other media; administration bulletins to faculty, staff, and others; and even a periodic newsletter created especially to sustain attention to the self-study. From time to time, visit key constituencies at their meetings and, as an agenda item, brief them on the Steering Committee's recent and upcoming activities. If your campus is small enough, hold regular convocations to update everyone on the status of the project, encouraging but not requiring attendance. When working in print, quote judiciously from the CEO's statement of commitment and from others who have lent important support. When using other media, use video and audio tape as appropriate.

4. Deal realistically with the self-study drafts.

Begin by lowering your expectations a little at the start: of course early submissions will be imperfect—that is why we have later drafts. Therefore, anticipate considerable rewriting and provide time in the calendar to do it. Follow up by making specific provisions to minimize inevitable problems. Establish a clear and simple format for the entire text and, as an example of what you expect, publish the Self-Study Plan and other materials consistently in that format, complete with required margins, graphics, pagination, and other details. Select for the Self-Study Report the most popular and versatile word processor already in use at your institution and, as far as possible, require everyone to use it. If you can, provide this software to units not already using it. Encourage all units to employ their acknowledged better writers on their portions of the draft, and plan to have one or two really superior writers go over the whole thing in its late stages to make it read with one voice. When at last you have a coherent, readable draft, place several loose-leafed copies in the library for a month, along with a simple critique form, and encourage everyone on campus to review it and offer suggestions for improvement. Finally, if you can, assign a professional editor to clean up the final draft in all the little ways ordinary good writers still tend not to notice. You may have one or more of these usually underappreciated people somewhere on your campus who would be elated to have such notice taken of their skills. Make arrangements for publication early, including time for adjustment as needed, and meet your deadline. Expect a few flaws to escape everyone's attention, for some will, and be satisfied that your product is good enough, because it probably will be.

5. Harness the energies of those not directly involved in the self-study.

Whether your colleagues, your boss, or your family, all of those with competing priorities really do understand that your responsibilities are important. As opportunities permit, provide them with ways to channel their energies into helping you. The office mate or comrade down the hall who is adept at computers, statistics, or text editing has something to offer, and collecting even a few such contributions from many different sources quickly adds up to a lot of assistance that people usually are pleased to give. Similarly, the boss who has resources to commit but, unencouraged, might not think to do so may provide just the money, the hardware, or the influence you need at some critical juncture in your work. Even families, who rightly lay claim to your time and attention, can offer aid you might not expect. Unanticipated gifts include the subtlety and finesse of the spouse with an acute, outsider editorial ear and the computer sophistication of some teenagers. Given the chance, those who love you most will often want most to be part of the solution, not part of the problem. Find ways to let them.

6. Have faith in yourself, your Self-Study Plan, and your calendar.

Remember that you were appointed Self-Study Coordinator because the experienced people around you believed that you could fill the position successfully. No one chose you expecting or intending that you or the project would fail. Although you will struggle from time to time to keep up with the work and the calendar, there also will be times when the same imperfect foresight allows you to catch up. In the end you probably will complete the work required on schedule, if only just barely.

In the end, if you implement even a few of the steps suggested here and elsewhere, including those you invent yourself, if you rely on the good people who are committed as you are, and if you follow through with determination, you will find at the end of the road, whether of Yellow Brick or some less noble cobbling, not bluebirds over rainbows, perhaps, but successful collaboration in an undertaking crucial to the well-being of your institution. You may even do so well that they ask you to do it again!

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Twelve-Part Process for the Self-Study Coordinator

Darrell Zoch

In January of 1992, I was summoned to our President's office early on a Monday morning. Upon arriving, I was informed that I was being appointed as the Self-Study Coordinator and final writer in preparation for a comprehensive visit in the fall of 1994. At that time, the assignment seemed somewhat intimidating. However, it was comforting to note that the culmination of this effort-the team visit-was some 34 months into the future! With that much lead time it seemed that all things were possible, so I accepted the assignment enthusiastically.

A speaker at the 1992 NCA annual meeting said, "The most important thing your president can do for you as a coordinator is provide you with adequate lead time." Those words were comforting and well received because we were looking at a team visit almost three years into the future. In retrospect, that statement proved to be emphatically correct. We utilized each and every one of those 34 months in preparation for a successful team visit in October of 1994. The team visit culminated in the scheduling of the next comprehensive evaluation in ten years.

It is out of that three-year experience that I have developed a 12-part process for the Self-Study Coordinator. In sharing it, I hope that it will in some small way contribute to your preparation and understanding as you prepare to embark upon what can truly become one of the most challenging and gratifying ventures of a lifetime!

1. Becoming the Newly Appointed Coordinator

As a newly appointed coordinator, you will have an important first question: Why me? It is essential that you take the time to reflect seriously on this question. Be assured that you were not selected at random. The NCA accreditation or reaccreditation process is crucial, and the position of coordinator is fundamental to the successful outcome of that process. The probability is high that you were chosen because you have demonstrated management skills, including planning, organizing, leading, and controlling. Each of those components will be brought to bear as you begin to move through a two-year-plus odyssey of great importance to your institution and to you.

You will probably be expected to continue all or almost all the duties of your current assignment in addition to that of functioning as the Self-Study Coordinator. Your sense of overload during this period is a virtual certainty. To prevail and succeed as you move through this long journey-and you will-you must give additional attention to your ongoing state of physical and emotional readiness.

Contain stress levels immediately by beginning the process. Following the appointment, you will be tempted to procrastinate because the team visit seems so distant. Rather than falling prey to those thoughts take immediate steps to begin your journey. Assemble your own personal library of NCA materials, including the NCA Handbook of Accreditation. Also, assemble copies of all previous NCA team reports. This should include not only comprehensive visits but also information relative to any focused visits or reports. Become intimately familiar with each and every one of them. They will literally become your roadway to success.

2. Laying the Cornerstone of the Self-Study

Three elements provide the all-important cornerstones upon which your self-study will build. These are the following:

- The institutional mission statement

- The institutional strategic plan
- The institutional assessment plan

The institutional mission statement defines an institution's very reason for existence. The institutional strategic plan identifies what types of strategies the institution plans to utilize in accomplishing organizational objectives consistent with the mission statement. The institutional assessment plan is the control component.

3. Building Alliances and Internal Support

You are embarking upon a journey in which you cannot prevail alone. You must begin to build alliances and internal support immediately. In preparing to do so, you must give consideration to each of the following:

- Your president
- Your supervisor
- Your subordinates
- Your peers

Your president is an influential and visible resource. Therefore, it becomes inordinately important that you immediately begin to build an appropriate alliance with that individual. More than any other single person in the organization, the president can serve as a powerful facilitator for the entire process. Our president made the comment very early in the process that the NCA Self-Study, "Will launch the College into the 21st Century." That statement underscored, for all, the importance of the project and his commitment to it. It would serve later as a source of encouragement and motivation as well as an overall point of reference.

Spend time with all the people in each of the above categories at an early date. Share with each your expectations, your plans, your concerns, and your need for their support. They will respect you for seeking them out.

4. Initiating Some Preliminary Activities

One of the challenges for the new coordinator is to develop a sense of "immediacy" because of the seemingly distant date for the team visit. One recommendation is to utilize the critical path method in developing a timetable of activities. Some "cushion" must be built into the timetable to accommodate the unforeseen. An additional early step is that of building awareness and visibility for the process, including the self-study, the team visit, resulting accreditation decisions, and their importance to the institution. For the process to be successful, all employees at the institution must begin to develop a knowledge of and appreciation for the total process. Furthermore, many of them must become not only knowledgeable but actively involved in some facet of the self-study.

An "external expert" can be very effective at an early date in building awareness and a sense of significance in the minds of all employees. An NCA staff member, an NCA evaluator, or someone from a similar institution of higher education can be invaluable in delivering and reinforcing this message.

A budget must also be established at an early date. Consideration must be given to the cost of attending the NCA Annual Meeting by you and other members of the institution, other travel and training expenses, materials and supplies, etc.

5. Building a Committee System that Works

The journey you have embarked upon cannot be traveled alone. Your success will not be a product of your individual efforts. Rather it will be a product of multiple teams or committees that you must now begin to assemble. Every player on every team or committee is vital. The project success is going to be a product of the readiness level of each of the team players. Readiness as used here defines a person that has the training, experience, and willingness to play an active role as a committee member. Remember that your committee members are your most important assets. At the same time, you must also remember that almost all or all of your committee members are volunteers. Their priorities, their level of commitment, and their sense of timeliness may not parallel yours. Respect their perspectives and how they may differ from yours. At times you will need to draw upon the virtue of patience.

Positioning yourself appropriately to work effectively with your committees and subcommittees is an important step. Give careful consideration to the management and leadership styles that you are most comfortable with and that are most appropriate to this project. You must establish yourself in a leadership role while at the same time demonstrating a management style that is highly participatory. This means that you must be prepared to delegate extensively. Successful delegation includes the sharing of relatively equal amounts of authority and responsibility with the various team members while at the same time retaining accountability for the project by you.

The steering committee undergirds the entire process. You must give particular consideration to the representation, expertise, numbers, and readiness of each of the participants.

You will probably want to establish an assessment committee. The makeup and the role of the assessment committee is going to be heavily influenced by the status of your current assessment plan.

In addition to the above two committees, you need to establish a number of subcommittees. You may consider establishing a subcommittee to address each of the key areas of the self-study once the outline of the self-study is complete.

6. Making It Happen

You must continually build and reinforce commitment to the self-study project. A comprehensive kickoff can be very effective in the beginning of this process. If possible, the kickoff should include all employees of the college.

This is also an excellent time to reinforce the significance of NCA accreditation and the importance that the self-study and the upcoming site visit will play in that process. In addition, this is an excellent time to publicize the timetable and to seek additional participation in the process.

7. Expanding Awareness, Support, and Participation Throughout the Institution

As coordinator for the self-study, you have one initial responsibility: that of maintaining ongoing communication. To fulfill this responsibility appropriately, you must provide regular "updates" to your president, the board of trustees, the college cabinet, employees of the college, advisory committee members, and groups external to the college.

8. Establishing the Format for the Self-Study Report and the Appendix at an Early Date

As a minimum, you must carefully address five components as a part of the format for your Self-Study Report. They are the following:

- The introduction
- The 24 GIR's
- The responses to previous visits
- The five Criteria for Accreditation
- Appropriate materials for the appendix

Now is the time to draw upon your knowledge of the reports that you have reviewed as a part of the Annual Meeting as well as to draw upon the input of your various committee members. The important thing is that format be discussed and considered very carefully and that the decision be reached through discussion by and the support of the steering committee.

9. Assembling the Final Draft of the Self-Study

You should consider establishing a "final-filter" committee. The primary function of the final-filter committee is to review and scrutinize the drafts of all materials coming from the various subcommittees. The members of the final-filter committee require a comprehensive view of the entire college. With this background they are in a position to examine/evaluate materials with a view to omissions or errors of fact. This is a critical step, and it is the final opportunity to review materials before passing them along to the final writer.

The final writer has the responsibility for preparing the final grammatically and factually correct draft of the report. Obviously this writer must be a person who has the background to write correctly, accurately, and effectively.

Publishing and distributing of the report is an important step. One decision is that of publishing in-house or externally. Keep in mind that you are seeking a final document that is professional in every respect, including clarity and crispness of print, graphs, illustrations, etc. If you have the capacity to deliver that quality in-house, the issue is solved. If not, look quickly to outside vendors.

Do give careful consideration to the total quantity of the report to be published. Determine distribution requirements on campus, to the board of trustees, to other outside groups, and to the NCA.

10. Preparing for and Coordinating the Site Visit

The selection and equipping of a team work center is an integral part of team-visit preparation. The work center should be selected with a view toward its convenience for team members. It should provide adequate work space together with adequate computer, word processing, and telephone support. Secretarial support should also be available throughout the visit. The work center should be the information center for the team during their visit. As such, it should contain all the various support materials that have been assembled in anticipation of the team visit. Those materials should be of a magnitude so as to provide the preponderance of information that they need to access during their visit.

11. Assuring Availability of All Key People Throughout

Availability of key people, reservations, and transportation are all considerations that must be a part of the planning process for the team visit. Modest gifts such as a fruit basket at the hotel or motel together with a memento or mementos of the college are very appropriate. Gifts of consequence are inappropriate.

12. Postscript—After the Visit

Once the visit is completed, the results of the visit must be shared punctually and accurately with all employees and other interest groups as appropriate. As the coordinator of the self-study, you may or may not be assigned responsibility in this area. In any event you should follow through to assure that such distribution of information does take place, including external publicity as appropriate.

In summary, you will prevail, and you will succeed! Remember: you were chosen, in part, because of your previous successes. *Best wishes as you embark upon the odyssey of a lifetime!*

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How Did I Get Myself into This? The Trials and Tribulations of a Self-Study Coordinator

Robert L. Frey

Introduction

It is not likely that many individuals campaign for the role of Self-Study Coordinator. Some might even accept the responsibility under pressure from the president or another administrator. Most Self-Study Coordinators are not even certain it is an experience that should be reflected on their resume. Yet the role of Self-Study Coordinator will be an extremely valuable educational experience, and it will provide a comprehensive picture of your college or university in a way that no other experience can provide. Furthermore, it will give you an opportunity to make a unique contribution to your institution and to your own professional development.

Some participants in this workshop will have taken part in previous self-studies. That is probably the best experience for becoming a coordinator. Nonetheless, it is helpful to talk with other coordinators and to learn from their experiences, and that is more important if the coordinator has not been a member of a steering committee, a committee chair, or a member of a committee in an earlier self-study process. This workshop presentation is based on the experiences of a person who has been the coordinator of three self-studies in three different institutions and two regional accrediting agencies over a fifteen-year period.

Qualifications of a Self-Study Coordinator

While it is often difficult to determine the precise reasons why an individual is chosen to be a self- study coordinator, several common strengths or abilities are needed to be a successful coordinator. These include:

- organizational skills
- decision-making skills
- knowledge of the institution
- respect of the faculty, administration, and staff

In a small institution the Self-Study Coordinator's relationship with the president is extremely important. Most presidents will not take an active role in the day-to-day operation of the self-study. Nonetheless, it is important for the coordinator to determine the president's wishes in this matter as soon as possible after accepting the position. It is extremely important that the president provide public support for the self-study in several visible ways. These will be discussed during the workshop. Other items that need to be reviewed with the president include the:

- type of self-study to be conducted
- composition of the steering committee
- timetable for the self-study (particularly the date of the evaluation team's visit).

Unless the president directs otherwise, the coordinator must keep the president appraised of the progress of the study frequently, either by written or oral reports.

First Steps

After being selected coordinator and after an initial visit with the president, the coordinator should be able to proceed with the first steps in the self-study process. The first step is to secure a copy of the current NCA *Handbook of Accreditation* (currently the 1994-96 version) if you do not already have one. This resource is essential for any coordinator and will be extremely helpful in all phases of the self-study. The coordinator should also contact the NCA staff person who is assigned as the institution's liaison with the NCA early in the process to talk with him or her and to ask them any questions. If the NCA staff liaison is not familiar with your college or if your self-study experience is limited, a visit to the campus by the staff liaison is essential. In any event, a visit is advisable for reasons mentioned below.

Another early decision, the type of study to be conducted, is generally a relatively easy decision. If it has been six to ten years since the last NCA evaluation and if the institution has not undergone a fundamental change in its mission, a comprehensive evaluation should be the type of self-study selected. The composition of the steering committee is also an important early step. This usually involves consultation with individuals beyond the president and will require substantial knowledge of the college culture. During the workshop a number of options for the size, composition, and role of the steering committee will be examined.

As soon as possible in the process a timeline for the self-study must be constructed. This timeline will be determined primarily by the date the president wants the NCA to visit the campus. Once this date is determined by the institution and by the NCA, the timeline can be constructed backwards from that date. The example timeline in the *Handbook* (pp. 115-117) is most helpful. Depending on the stage of the self-study at the institutions represented by the coordinators in the workshop, implications of various timelines will be considered.

Finally, it is important to consider how the self-study process should be presented to the entire campus. The extent to which the faculty, administration, and staff has undergone change since the last self-study is a major consideration in this step. If many faculty members have been added since the last self-study, a significant educational effort will be needed to explain the self-study process. Here is where a visit from the NCA staff member will provide significant assistance. It is also important that the president join in this presentation to affirm the importance of the self- study. Since the presentation of the self-study process to the campus community is an extremely critical step, further specific suggestions will be made regarding this presentation in the workshop.

Getting Organized

There are many ways to organize the institution for the self-study process. Key questions that must be answered in any self-study, however, include:

- what committees will be necessary and how will they function in relation to already existing committees?
- if a separate committee structure is deemed necessary, what committees should be created, who should be appointed to them (what qualifications should they have), and how should they be appointed?
- to what extent should board members, students, alumni, members of the community, and other constituencies be involved in the self-study process?
- what charge should be given to the committees and how should their progress be monitored?
- how will the steering committee be used in this process?

A number of alternatives to each of these questions will be explored in the workshop with an assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of each approach and some examples of how and why specific approaches did or did not work. Since the answer to these questions depends heavily on the culture of each campus, definitive answers cannot be expected in this workshop.

Staying on Task

One of the biggest challenges for a coordinator is to make sure the process of data collection and analysis of the data proceeds according to the timeline. This is made more difficult by the fact that normal institutional business must continue and most faculty members at smaller institutions will not receive released time for work on the self-study (in fact, in some cases the coordinator will receive little or no released time). Once again the importance of the presentation of the self-study process cannot be underestimated. The college community must understand the high priority of the self-study during the limited time it takes out of the institution's life. Community members also need to understand the benefits of the self-study process beyond the renewal of accreditation. It is the responsibility of the coordinator to make sure these points are communicated effectively to the college community.

The workshop presentation will include suggestions to keep people "on task" in the self-study process. It will also include suggestions about the form in which committees will be asked to submit their reports to the steering committee and how to use the steering committee in formulating the first draft report. Through this phase the role of the coordinator is primarily that of a facilitator, coach, and motivator. In performing these roles, however, it does make a difference whether the coordinator is a faculty member or an administrator. The differences will also be examined in the workshop presentation.

Involving the Entire College

No matter how representative committees are and no matter how hard the coordinator attempts to involve a broad cross-section of the college community in the self-study process, there will always be some members of the faculty, staff, or administration who will say "I was left out of the self- study." There are ways to minimize this type of comment and to gain campus-wide support for the self-study process. This workshop will describe the "hearings" approach to opening the draft report for college-wide review, discussion, criticism, and improvement. This approach is most effective at relatively small institutions (less than 300 faculty members) because it is a labor-intensive method for which adequate plans must be made at the outset of the self-study process.

The Final Report and Team Visit

Since this workshop is for new coordinators, it is unlikely that the self-study process at their institutions will get beyond the "hearings" stage during the first year. Nonetheless, the coordinator should have an understanding of the whole process before starting a self-study. Accordingly, the final part of this workshop will provide a brief overview of the remaining stages of the self-study process.

- organizing and compiling the final report
- the tone of the report
- the role of the editor
- process for selection of the NCA evaluation team
- coordinator's responsibilities for the NCA team visit
- the coordinator's task after the team visit
- final steps in the review process

It is important that the results of the self-study process and the resultant NCA visit not be "put on a shelf" to be forgotten until time for the next self-study. If the self-study is to have any lasting impact on the college it is important that steps be taken to address concerns and suggestions raised in the process. Therefore, the final comments in the workshop will examine the role of the coordinator after the commission has reaffirmed the accreditation of the college.

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Essential Tools for the Self-Study: Goals, Organization, and Evaluation

Ferol S. Menzel

The Self-Study Report constitutes the institution's formal request for initial or continued accreditation *(Handbook of Accreditation)*. On the face of it, the completion of the Self-study Report seems a task clear in outcome, simple in process, and highly motivating to everyone involved. Institutions are, however, complex human organizations consisting of busy people, the occasional conflict over goals, and a degree of myopia regarding the evaluation of the work of the institution. The Self-Study Coordinator is charged with the responsibility of marshaling the forces and people of the academic community to complete a self-study that meets the needs of the institution, evaluates the work of the college or university, and is completed on time. Grand View College has, over the last two decades, successfully completed two Self-Study Reports. From this experience and my experience as a consultant-evaluator, I believe there are three tools essential for the successful completion of the Self-Study Report: goals, organization , and evaluation.

Writing Goals for the Self-Study

Although the Self-Study Report is used to demonstrate that an institution meets the Criteria for Accreditation and the General Institutional Requirements, it is also an excellent vehicle for accomplishing other institution-wide goals. Grand View College used the self-study process to evaluate the success of its strategic plan, refine the strategic planning process, and launch a new strategic plan based upon the strengths and needs identified during the self-study. Although the strategic plan was reviewed annually, the self-study gave everyone at the college an opportunity to assess the success of the comprehensive development priorities and establish new institution-wide goals. In addition, the College wanted to revise the ongoing planning process to better integrate budgeting, planning, and program assessment and review. One committee was assigned the task of looking back at the planning process and developing a new system for better integration of what had been disparate parts of the process. The Grand View College self-study goals were:

1. To continue accreditation with the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools by demonstrating through the self-study process that the College meets the General Institutional Requirements and the Criteria for Accreditation.
2. To evaluate the success of the 1991-1994 Strategic Plan and develop comprehensive development priorities for 1995-1999.
3. To initiate the implementation of the assessment of academic achievement as outlined in the Draft Assessment Plan approved by the faculty in April, 1993.
4. To determine a way to integrate into one system the currently separate processes of Institutional Planning and Budgeting, Academic Department Review, and Assessment of Academic Achievement.

Other institutions have used the self-study process to revise mission (allow extra time if this is the case), improve resource development, evaluate specific majors, and launch the assessment of academic achievement. The goals selected are extremely important and will allow the institution to focus time and energy on mutually agreed upon activities that will move the institution forward.

Organizing the Self-Study Process

Sustaining the self-study process over a period of approximately two years requires presidential support and leadership; resources, such as time and computer support; institutional research; secretarial support; and, finally, organization. Having a clear road map of the steps to be completed, the resources necessary, the people needed to complete the work, and an outline of the self-study will make the two-year process go more smoothly.

- **Develop a two-year schedule.** First, it is important to develop a two-year schedule that can be provided to the entire academic community. This schedule includes committee meetings and deadlines, and editing and publishing deadlines. Specific dates and times will assist the Self-Study Coordinator to keep people on task. This schedule can be developed based upon the sample timeline provided in the Handbook of Accreditation. If the institution organizes a new set of committees to conduct the self-study, some consideration should be given to reducing major institutional responsibilities for the people most involved in the self-study. This may involve delaying a new initiative for a semester until the data gathering and analysis are complete.

- **Establish a resource room.** Prior to the self-study, a resource room was organized at Grand View College that contained many of the documents faculty and staff would need for analysis. Bylaws, state accreditation reports, surveys conducted over the past ten years, previous self-study reports, planning documents, academic program reviews, college publications, minutes from committees, and other documents were cataloged and assembled during the summer prior to the self-study kick-off. In addition, a list was compiled of offices, people, and the type of information they could provide should committee members need to go beyond the resource room. This reduced the time spent seeking information that would serve as the basis for analysis.

- **Select committees.** Organizing the Steering Committee and the chapter committees is also an important task. The Steering Committee should include individuals who have an understanding of the institution, its mission, and its challenges. Committee members must be dependable when it comes to meeting deadlines and have some skill in getting people to complete a task they know very little about. At Grand View College chapter committees were established using both faculty and administrative staff from different departments and divisions. Although individuals were not always knowledgeable about their specific assignment, this approach gave people an opportunity to see the institution from a new perspective and work with individuals not encountered on a daily basis. Developing these work groups is entirely up to the institution and should be based on institutional needs. However, getting the best people in leadership positions will assist the Self-Study Coordinator to keep the process moving forward.

- **Develop an outline.** Providing an outline for the self-study is also helpful even though the outline may be modified as the Steering Committee develops the report. It is especially important to determine where in the self-study the major goals will be addressed. For example, the integration of the planning process (Goal Four) was addressed in the Grand View College Self-Study in the same chapter as Criterion Four: "the institution can continue to accomplish its purposes and strengthen its educational effectiveness." Once the goals for the self-study are established, time can be saved by presenting an outline to the Steering Committee based upon the Handbook for Accreditation.

Writing an Evaluative Self-Study Report

Each institution in the North Central Region has a unique mission and set of purposes consistent with its mission (Criterion One). "The Commission's accreditation processes measure an institution against its specifically stated purposes" (*Handbook of Accreditation*). It is important that everyone who works on the self-study understand the purposes of the institution and how to establish patterns of evidence related to these purposes.

Assume for the moment that your institution has the following educational purpose: communicate effectively through listening, speaking, and writing. Relative to Criterion Two, the institution must demonstrate that human, financial, and physical resources have been effectively organized to accomplish this purpose. For example, are there sufficient academic resources such as learning resource centers, computers, and library resources to assist students in accomplishing this purpose? Sufficiency may be determined by using benchmark institutions, student opinion surveys, percent of budget devoted to the resources, opportunity throughout the curriculum to develop these skills, and other measures designed to illustrate that the institution has the resources to educate students in listening, speaking, and writing. Relative to Criterion Three, the institution must demonstrate that it is accomplishing its educational and other purposes. Sufficiency for Criterion Three may be determined through the assessment of academic achievement (improved writing skills at graduation), demonstrated ability to speak in public based upon predetermined criteria, students' self-evaluation of writing or speaking ability.

A description of resources may be a necessary part of the Self-Study Report but description is not sufficient. Patterns of evidence answer the "so what" question. Having 100,000 volumes in the library does not tell a team or the institutional planners whether the library has sufficient resources to support listening, writing, and speaking in general education as well as the major. Having 16 buildings and 37 faculty members, does not tell a team or other audiences whether the physical facilities are adequate for the purposes of the institution or the size of the faculty is sufficient to carry out the purposes of the institution. Facilitating this process may be done by including description and evaluation in each section of the outline of the self-study. The temptation to rely on description is understandable, but the Self-Study Coordinator must resist writing a descriptive document in order to guide the team toward an evaluative self-study.

These three tools—goals, organization, and evaluation—will not only help the institution complete a successful Self-Study Report, but will assist the institution in completing a critical analysis of its strengths and needs. This critical analysis can and should contribute to the ongoing planning process of the institution resulting in each institution successfully carrying out its mission and purposes.

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Practical Planning Procedures for New Self-Study Coordinators

Richard D. Brauhn

I assumed my position as Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at Dickinson State University (North Dakota) on July 1, 1991. Approximately two weeks later, I was asked by our President if I would be the coordinator for preparing the self-study that was part the University's reaccreditation request slated for the spring of 1995. Fortunately, I had served as a Self-Study Coordinator at another NCA institution albeit some years prior to my coming to DSU. And, because the self-study was not due for completion until December of 1994 with the campus visit occurring in March 1995, I thought I would have time on my side. So, I blithely accepted the coordinator's task and assured myself that all would be well in the end. Indeed, we did complete our self-study on time, the campus visit went well, and DSU was granted continued accreditation with the next comprehensive evaluation in ten years. But, if I had to attribute the success of our reaccreditation to one single factor, I would immediately point to our *self-study plan* that was a goal and task oriented outline within time parameters that allowed the University to complete the reaccreditation process without last-minute, desperate attempts to put "something" together. The Self-Study Report was the crowning achievement of our reaccreditation process and received many compliments from our evaluation team and from sister institutions throughout North Dakota. The following is explanation why I think planning is all-important for Self-Study Coordinators. And for new "first-time" coordinators, the "plan" lets you determine (and answer) the "who, what, and when" questions involved in putting together this lynch-pin of reaccreditation.

Who Needs A Plan?

☐ Coordinator Needs

Dickinson State is a small, public, regional university (enrollment of 1,600 with 75 FTE faculty) serving a broad area of rural southwestern North Dakota. The University was granted continued accreditation and placed in a ten-year cycle by the last evaluation team from North Central in 1985; it has been accredited since 1928. So, DSU is a school that has a tradition of being an academically sound and well-managed institution. However, Dickinson State also has a small resource base (financial and otherwise) available to deal with major institutional projects such as reaccreditation and developing a comprehensive self-study. Moreover, the criteria and guidelines had changed dramatically since the University's last evaluation for continued accreditation; the new criteria, including the assessment component and Criterion Five dealing with institutional integrity, were totally new to me. Therefore, even though I had participated in an NCA reaccreditation before, this had taken place ten years previously at a different institution, and I needed "re-education" for the accreditation process. Much of this re-education was gained through attending NCA workshops for new coordinators, something that I highly recommend for all Self-Study Coordinators. For all the above reasons, I decided early on that in order to maximize scarce resources, re-educate myself (and the University) regarding reaccreditation, and develop the self-study in a meaningful manner that would prepare the institution for the campus visitation in the spring of 1995, a detailed and careful planning and organizational structure would have to be utilized to carry the University through the reaccreditation process. Plus, developing a "game-plan" or "strategy of attack" would also force me, as coordinator, to come to grips with the reality of figuring out how the self-study would be organized, what information would be included to demonstrate that all of the Criteria for Accreditation had been met, and how the delegation of responsibilities would be determined. Finally, a good plan also allows the coordinator to be a pro-active "leader" in determining the flow of the project rather than reacting to pressures of circumstance that may ultimately detract from the quality of the self-study.

☐ Steering Committee Needs

As I began to review the previous self-study for Dickinson State back in 1984-85, I soon discovered that only a handful of the faculty and administrators who had participated in the process were still employed at the University—a situation not uncommon at small institutions. Plus, those that had some knowledge and experience with the previous reaccreditation had participated only in an ancillary sense and could not recall how the self-study had been developed. Therefore, I had a slim repository of previous experience upon which to draw when creating an institutional steering committee. Indeed, when the 18 member steering committee was named, only one other individual had ever participated in creating a self-study from a "hands-on" perspective. This convinced me even further that the entire process would have to be well planned with a view toward educating the participants regarding input expectations and, to avoid anxiety attacks that would either immobilize or result in "scrap-work" that would need to be completely redone. In this sense, a well-developed plan with clear expectations and achievement goals laid out over a period of time would serve not only as a road-map for final achievement, but also as a "security blanket" to allay fears of foundering on the rocks and shoals of an unknown voyage, i.e., putting together an institutional self-study. So, developing a physical "self-study plan" was purposeful in order to give direction and support to those who would be doing much of the research and writing of the self-study.

☐ University Needs

Once developed and agreed upon by the steering committee, the self-study plan serves as a document for communicating to the University community (and host community) what the self-study is all about, what it will contain and what it will not. Many of our faculty and staff had neither experienced an NCA reaccreditation nor had participated in an institutional self-study. Even though the reaccreditation process had been discussed at various faculty meetings, the self-study plan served to dispel miscommunication and misperceptions about what kinds of information would be included (or excluded) in the self-study and who would be developing and compiling the final document. The self-study plan, with the accompanying abstract, answered many questions and provided direction for developing the self-study document that carried beyond the steering committee. Once completed, copies of the plan were given to Department Chairs, Directors, and many faculty and staff; copies were even made available to students and the general public. Thus, the "self-study" became rightfully perceived as an open and honest campus-wide attempt to assess the University according to reaccreditation standards and not some mystery document conceived by administrators for ulterior motives.

What

The initial question of what to include in a self-study plan will be the first important task for coordinators. The DSU self-study plan became a fairly large document as components were added either through a need for documentation of direction or as a means of communicating to the rest of the University what the steering committee was doing in order to achieve its goal. The following lists the sections within the plan in the order they were included and the rationale for inclusion.

☐ Abstract

This was the first section of the plan, and it was probably the last to be completed as an "add-on" after the plan was finished. What was crucial about the abstract was that it contained the goals and objectives of what we as an institution wanted to accomplish through the self-study. For DSU, it became apparent that the self-study would serve as a record of institutional growth and repository for data that could be used for future planning efforts. It was here also that we stated a synopsis of the overall plan in terms of what kinds of data would be gathered and how they would be presented. When finished, the abstract served as a brief explanation and expository of what the self-study was all about and proved to be effective in communicating this information internally to faculty and staff and also to external constituents within the community and the state as questions arose regarding the self-study and reaccreditation in general.

☐ Appointment of Coordinator and Presidential Charge

This short document did nothing more than reiterate what had already been communicated to the University; I was appointed coordinator and had the full responsibility for creating the self-study with complete support from the President's office. Although perhaps not necessary, this does serve to remind the institution that reaccreditation and the self-study are serious and that the entire University needs to help in the process.

☐ Steering Committee Membership

As coordinator, one of the very first tasks will be to recommend a steering committee for appointment by the President or other appropriate administrator. The coordinator cannot put together an institutional self-study through his/her sole efforts. Plus, broad involvement in the creation of the self-study ensures wider communication throughout the institution with regard to the whole reaccreditation process, a process that the average faculty/staff person does not understand completely. The inclusion of the membership list within the planning document served not only to indicate a "group responsibility" for the task at hand, but also as a contact list for any faculty/staff who had questions or input regarding the self-study. I chose to have a rather large steering committee of eighteen (18) individuals who were selected for one of three reasons: 1) to represent constituencies within the University, e.g., Faculty Senate President; 2) key individuals for data gathering and analysis, e.g., Vice President for Business Affairs for financial data; and 3) persons with particular skills, i.e., good writers for editing purposes and number-crunchers with computer skills.

☐ Sub-Committee Responsibilities

The next component within the plan was to demonstrate a division of tasks and responsibilities. Rather than have the entire steering committee work diligently on every aspect of the self-study, I divided the steering committee into sub-committees with chairs. I graphically illustrated this in an organizational chart that became part of the plan (see Figure 1). Then, major blocks of narrative response were assigned to various committees. Each sub-committee was responsible for one of the five self-study criteria with other aspects of the self-study assigned to smaller groups or individuals within the larger sub-committee. This aspect of the plan basically answers the question of "who is responsible for what." And, if committee members dropped out for various reasons, the self-study plan served to inform the new members of the tasks at hand and their roles in the overall project. I found the division of labor/responsibilities to be very effective, especially after the sub-committees and their chairs agreed to accept their duties through a participatory process involving the steering committee as a whole.

☐ Timeline of Objectives

The next aspect of the self-study plan was a measured response to the inevitable question to the coordinator by the sub-committee chairs: "when should the narratives be delivered to the coordinator?" As mentioned above, a timeline of specific objectives established in a flow-chart became essential. Obviously, not everything could be done simultaneously, nor was it necessary for each component of the self-study to be submitted at the same time. Plus, some of the narrative response could be written only after compilation of the most recent and pertinent data, which in some cases was in the spring of 1994, a full two years from the initial planning stage. However, a timeline was needed so sub-committees and chairs could plan ahead and fit their self-study work into their existing institutional schedules and responsibilities. I found that committee members were more prone to be positive helpers if they knew not only what was expected of them but also when it was expected. Moreover, a timeline serves as a constant reminder that certain aspects of the project are due at certain times and helps to diminish the procrastination factor that is inevitable in a large project that covers an extended period of time. The timeline that we developed (see Figure 2) was not adhered to exactly. But, it did give direction and expectation for completion of certain phases of the project in a timely fashion that prevented anxiety and enhanced a sense of accomplishment. Also, more of the project completed before timeline deadlines obviated a sense of urgency and panic during the last stages of our self-study.

☐ Submitting Responses

This brief part of the plan was essential to establish a standard format for delivering narrative responses to the coordinator and editor for final review. Because our campus is well-equipped with computer technology, we decided to have all of the self-study written in our institutional computer word processing format (IBM WordPerfect 5.1) and stored on disks and files for transporting among various offices. Although I had some disgruntled Macintosh users to placate, this decision facilitated the ease of putting the whole document together with a single editor doing formatting on a single machine. Also, the use of computer technology with multiple back-ups precluded losing parts of the self-study or not being able to find various parts for referral or revision. Unless this reporting format is established early, the coordinator may have a plethora of dissimilar bits and pieces that prevent an efficient formatting and editing process during the later stages of completion when the time-element becomes a dominant factor

☐ Draft Table of Contents

This section of the self-study plan was perhaps the most crucial in the success of our endeavor. A draft table of contents identified the types of responses, supportive data and documents, and responsible persons for every aspect of the self-study. This document began with an introduction with profiles of the institution and service community and proceeded to General Institutional Requirements, Concerns from the Self-Study, the Five Criteria, a Summary of Strengths and Weaknesses, a Request for Reaccreditation, and, finally, the Basic Institutional Data forms. The developing of this draft table of contents involved preliminary research, data gathering, and writing that served several important purposes. First, the development of the draft forced the sub-committees to make some early decisions regarding what they wanted to include in their narrative response, the type of supporting data needed, and how they wanted to formulate their approach. The draft table of contents also indicated an assignment of tasks within sub-committees as the data gathering, writing, and editing tasks were subdivided. Perhaps most important, once created, the entire draft table of contents served as a road-map and guide for completion of the project. This was not to say that the draft was written in stone and immutable. Indeed, this aspect of the self-study plan was changed quite a bit from its initial inception as we found out that certain approaches worked and others did not. The point however, is that the steering committee and the sub-committees had something to change and alter as they saw their responses changed and altered due to information from other committees or in light of new institutional data. Plus, the draft table of contents (which in reality was the prototype of the finished product) provided an overall plan of attack that everybody was initially comfortable with and, in the long run, saved time and resulted in better committee responses that enhanced the quality of the self-study.

☐ Appendices List

Because we wanted our self-study to serve as a repository for institutional data and documentation and because we wanted to support our narrative response with appropriate documentation, the steering committee decided to compile a separate document of appendices outside of the narrative response. The compilation of this list within the self-study plan forced the Committee to decide what would be seminal sources and documentation for their responses. This list was expanded several times before it was finalized. But, the initial core listing did not change and it provided a foundation for the draft responses.

☐ Exhibit List

This listing included documents too large to be included in an appendix but were deemed to be essential for reference and review by the evaluation team in an exhibit room. Again, this listing served to provide a foundation of documents from which data could be gained for writing narratives. And, like the appendices, the exhibits were expanded and edited as the self-study moved toward completion.

When

☐ Time Factor

One of the more compelling reasons for developing a self-study plan is the time-factor involved. Knowing already in the fall of 1991 that the self-study was due in NCA's Chicago office in December of 1994 gave many individuals within the University a false sense of security or, at the worst, what I called the "mañana syndrome"; three years was plenty of time to complete a self-study, we should really start "tomorrow" if not next month or next year. But, in reality, because the institution was literally starting from scratch with regard to data collection, analyses, and compiling, time was already running out by the end of 1991. Plus, because Dickinson State did not have the luxury of assigning the self-study to its institutional research department or the latitude of shifting work responsibilities or granting teaching load reductions to steering committee members, the self-study would have to be developed on top of existing tasks and duties that siphoned away much of the productive time available to work on the project. Taking this into consideration, three years did not seem long enough when considering all the other institutional and day-to-day chores that had to be accomplished simultaneously while working on the self-study.

Development of a self-study plan that included a timeline of goals to be achieved divided the project into parcels that could be accomplished bit by bit over a relatively long period of time (note accompanying figure). The self-study plan that I developed included a flow chart of objectives indicated by year and month. This chart provided a physical reminder that certain tasks needed to be accomplished in sequence if the entire project was to be completed by the deadline in December 1994. Plus, as each part (goal) was achieved, a measure of success and accomplishment was likewise achieved. In short, this sense of achievement helped to carry the project through to fruition in a balanced, orderly fashion. And, as the project progressed, what seemed like an insurmountable task initially became more manageable if spread out over a time period that seemed acceptable. As the Chinese proverb states, "a journey of a thousand miles begins with one step"; my corollary would state "after a 1,000 steps, you're that much closer and soon, there will be no steps left and our journey will be complete." The timeline and goal achievement flow chart was also necessary to demonstrate that we as a University needed to start NOW in creating the self-study and that the process was a serious institutional project that needed completion. In all honesty, I built a "fudge-factor" into the timeline to allow for unforeseen problems or delays. But, for myself as coordinator, it was mentally refreshing at times to know that I actually had a built-in cushion. However, steering committee members and others throughout the University saw the timeline as a motivational factor in terms of their participation and input. Also, your committee members and others on whom you rely on to provide data or help are more likely to provide positive input if you indicate when the help is needed. Do not ask the week or day before, so that their own work schedules are displaced.

Summary

Every NCA institution knows when its self-study is due and when the evaluation visit will take place well in advance of the actual events occurring. Starting well in advance of due dates (at least three years) will allow institutions to develop a self-study plan that will help to maximize time and personnel resources. The development of a plan will help the coordinator to serve as a leader in mobilizing institutional resources. A self-study plan will also serve as a motivator for action and give committee members a sense of direction. From an involvement and communication aspect, the self-study plan and abstract serve as powerful vehicles to communicate to the University faculty and staff just exactly what the self-study is all about and the kinds of reporting necessary as part of the reaccreditation process. Indeed, the self-study was duplicated and spread widely throughout the University; a procedure that invited involvement and made the development of the self-study an open process.

At DSU, we spent probably 17 months in developing a coherent, workable plan to follow in creating the self-study and, an *equal time* in actually writing the self-study. *But,* the actual writing of the narratives was made much easier and was accomplished in a more timely fashion because *a firm foundation had already been laid for success in the preceding planning process*. Moreover, when I needed help from our NCA staff liaison during the reaccreditation process, I had a document that I could refer to specifically. Indeed, I requested that our liaison review the finished self-study plan for suggested alterations in order to help improve the quality of the self-study. Your NCA staff liaison is an invaluable source of aid, and coordinators should work closely with their liaison especially when unanswerable questions arise or apparent road-blocks are hit. Again, the self-plan was not immutable and was changed many times to better fit data or responses. But, the plan provided a focus for our energy and time and truly proved to be a "road-map" to success. I would urge all new coordinators to use this planning approach in creating their self-studies. I am sure if you do, you will find the time well-spent and helpful toward creating a quality self-study in which your institution can take pride.

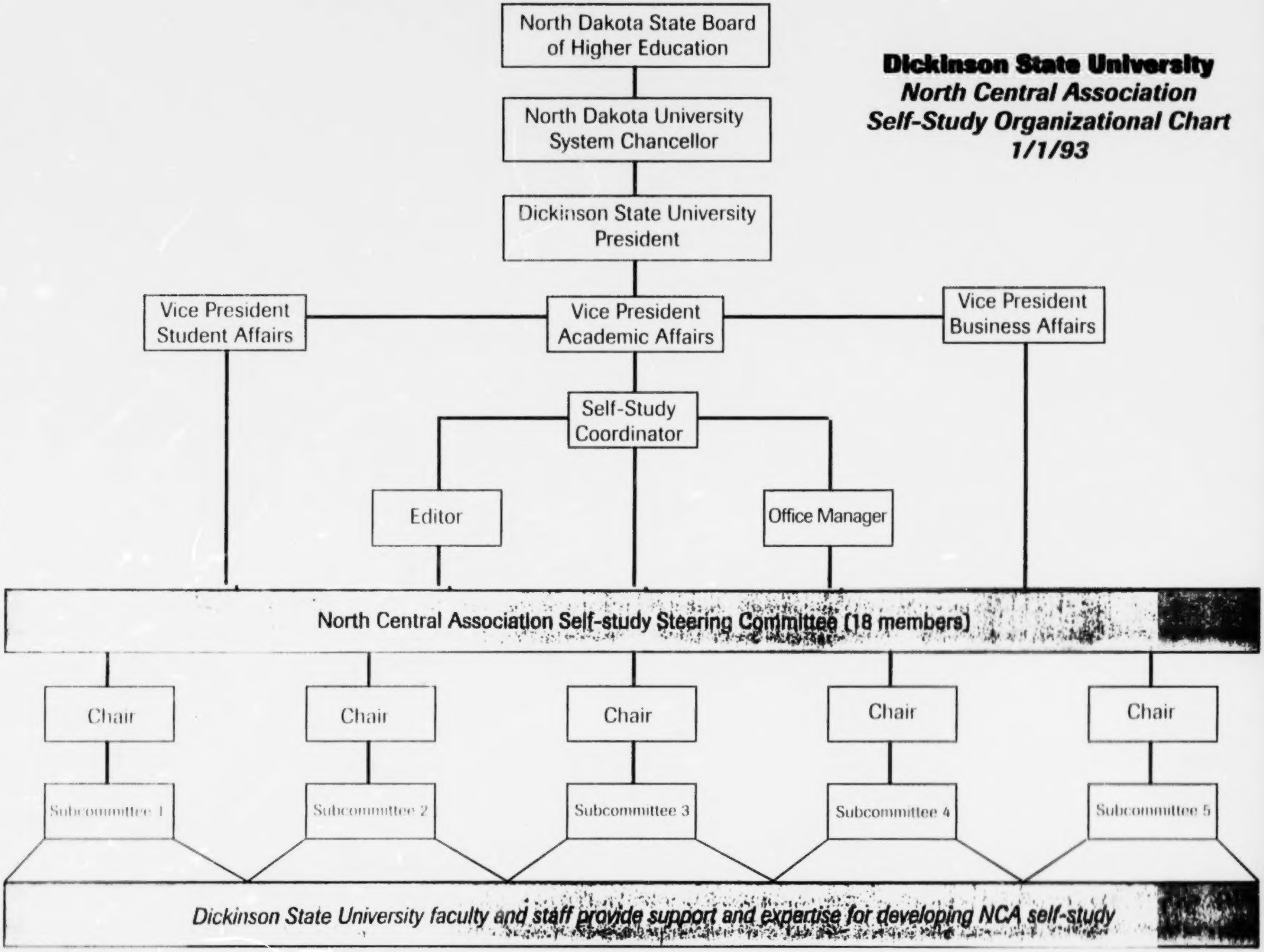
Appendices

Appendix A: *Dickinson State University Self-Study Organization Chart*

Appendix B: *Dickinson State University Self-Study Timeline and Objectives Flow Chart*

Richard D. Brauhn is Dean, College of Arts and Sciences, Dickinson State University, Dickinson, ND.

Dickinson State University
North Central Association
Self-Study Organizational Chart
1/1/93


North Dakota State Board of Higher Education
North Dakota University System Chancellor
Dickinson State University President
Vice President Student Affairs
Vice President Academic Affairs
Vice President Business Affairs
Self-Study Coordinator
Editor
Office Manager
North Central Association Self-study Steering Committee (18 members)
Chair
Chair
Chair
Chair
Chair
Subcommittee 1
Subcommittee 2
Subcommittee 3
Subcommittee 4
Subcommittee 5
Dickinson State University faculty and staff provide support and expertise for developing NCA self-study

Dickinson State University

NCA Self-Study Timeline and Objectives Flow Chart

Fall 91	Spring 92	Summer 92	Fall 92	Spring 93	Summer 93	Fall 93	Spring 94	Summer 94	Fall 94	Spring 95
1. **President appoints NCA Self-Study Coordinator** 2. Long Range Academic Planning	1. **Self-Study** Coordinator attends North Central Convention a. Self-Study workshop attended b. Other Self-Studies reviewed 2. Long Range Academic Planning Committee develops institutional assessment plan in order to meet Criterion Three of NCA evaluation 3. Self-Study timeline is developed	1. **President informs Commission of designated Self-Study Coordinator** 2. Confirm with Commission preferred date for campus visit in March 1995 (if possible) 3. Steering Committee selected 4. Develop sub-committees for each reaccreditation criterion a. Subcommittee membership selected 5. Coordinator develops draft model and technical plan for self-study	1. **Assessment program implemented** 2. Draft of working table of contents is developed 3. Steering committee is convened a. Review 1985 Team Evaluation and Statement of Affiliation Status (SAS) b. Review and approve model and technical plan c. Review and approve working table of contents 1) Review appendices list 2) Review exhibit list 4. Subcommittees approved for each NCA Criterion and associated General Institutional Requirements (GIRs) a. Assignments for each subcommittee approved 1) Information needs developed 2) Procedures and timetable developed for subcommittees	1. **Self-Study Plan is completed and submitted to NCA staff liaison for review** 2. Subcommittee convene a. Data gathering begun b. Drafting of narrative responses begun 3. Rough draft/outlines of subcommittee reports: Criterion One (Clear and Publicly Stated Purposes Consistent with Mission) and, Two (Organization of Human, Financial, and Physical Resources Necessary to Accomplish Purposes) and accompanying General Institutional Requirements due to Coordinator by April 1st 4. Steering Committee and Coordinator review rough drafts, analyze information, and assemble rough draft of composite report for Criteria One and Two 5. Self-Study Coordinator attends NCA spring convention 6. Coordinator and Vice President for Academic Affairs determine reaccreditation budget considerations for the 1993-95 biennium	1. **NCA responses/ changes (if any) incorporated into Self-Study Plan** 2. Coordinator and Editor review and refine rough draft for Criteria One and Two 3. Appendices and exhibits formatted 4. Response to Concerns from 1985 Evaluation Team developed by assigned Steering Committee members	1. **Subcommittees continue to work on draft responses** **a. Response for Criteria Three (Accomplishing Educational and Other Purposes) and Criteria Four (Institution Can Continue to Accomplish Purposes) and associated General Institutional Requirements submitted by Nov. 1st** 2. Steering Committee reviews rough draft organization for Criteria Three and Four and accompanying GIRs 3. Subcommittees for Criteria One and Two review their draft responses with respect to drafts from Three and Four 4. Coordinator, Editor, and Publisher review draft responses submitted by all subcommittees to date	1. **Basic Institutional Data Forms and new General Institutional Requirement Forms (if any) from NCA distributed to appropriate people for completion** 2. Coordinator, Editor, and Publisher prepare composite report of Criteria One to Four by March 1st 3. Draft response for Criteria Five (Integrity in Practice and Relationships) and accompanying General Institutional Requirements developed by Subcommittee Five and submitted to Coordinator by April 1st 4. Coordinator attends Spring NCA convention in order to gain new information necessary to complete self-study in the fall a. Spring 1995 dates of March 20-22 for Evaluation Team visit to campus reconfirmed 5. Steering Committee reviews rough draft of Criteria Five response by May 1st 6. Completed Basic Institutional Data forms due to Coordinator by May 1st	1. **Coordinator, Editor and Publisher prepare rough draft of final composite self-study report** **a. General Institutional Requirements are reviewed for accuracy and coordination with Criteria responses** 2. Basic Institutional Data Forms are reviewed for accuracy 3. "Strengths and concerns" part of self-study is developed by chairs of the subcommittees 4. Appendices are finalized 5. Exhibits are finalized	1. **Faculty workshop on NCA Self-Study and reaccreditation process, August pre-session** 2. Steering Committee reviews draft of final copy of self-study (including strengths and concerns part) and recommends changes-September 3. President drafts request for re-accreditation 4. Copy of final draft of self-study sent to NCA Commission contact person (Dr. Jean Mather) for review by September 30th 5. Final draft circulated to university community and responses solicited-October 6. Final changes, additions, deletions, etc. made to final draft by Steering Committee and Coordinator in response to NCA review-November a. Check and update all data forms (if necessary) 7. Self-study ready to print and given to (in-house) publisher by December 1st 8. Report mailed to NCA office (complete set of evaluation materials) by December 31, 1994	1. **January 1995: Check and update all data forms (if necessary)** **a. Revise self-study if required by NCA** 2. February 1, 1995: mail complete self-study and associated materials to Evaluation Team members 3. Finalize plans for on-site visit by Evaluation Team-March 1st 4. Evaluation Team Visit: March 20-22nd 5. Evaluation Team report and recommendation to NCA reviewed by Steering Committee-April a. Response to report prepared (if necessary)-May

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Early Planning for NCA Evaluation: Start Three Years Before the Visit

Becky Johnson
Terry Zambon

It is likely that most readers of this paper will be among those coming up for accreditation review by NCA within the next three years. Some of you may have participated in a self-study and accreditation review before. Many of you will not have done so since this event occurs only once every ten years for a given institution.

Our goal in this presentation/paper is to offer you a roadmap to follow during the planning stages of your accreditation review—long before the first draft of the report ever surfaces.

In the Initial Stages

Even before you begin to organize your self-study, you should address several issues that you will need to deal with. Before starting to organize your self-study you should read the last Self-Study Report for your institution. This will give you ideas of what to include in the present self-study. In addition, you need to read the Team Report from the previous NCA evaluation. It will contain points of concern that you must address in the report. Another issue is funding for the self-study and the evaluation visit. If your institution regularly budgets for accreditation reviews, it would still be wise to check with your budget director and make sure that adequate funds will be available for this activity. Yet another issue that you should address is contacting your institutional research office regarding the information needed for the Basic Institutional Data forms.

Now is the time to start publicizing the self-study on campus as well as in the community. Most students and many faculty and staff members will not be familiar with the accreditation process. One thing that the evaluation team will be looking for during the visit is evidence that the self-study has been an open process involving the campus community as a whole.

If you have had prior experience with this process, it will prove valuable in your current accreditation review. Nevertheless, details of the process have probably changed since you last worked with it. So now is the time to review the process you will be using this time. You should also take advantage of others on your campus or within your state who may have experience with the self-study process. Some individuals who were involved in your last accreditation review will probably still be available to serve as valuable resources.

You may find it useful to consult the Self-Study Coordinators at one or more institutions who have recently completed their self-study and peer-review. You can find out when any institution had its last accreditation review by looking in the *NCA Quarterly* that lists all of the higher education institutions that it accredits.

Each institution is assigned to an NCA staff liaison with whom you will work as you progress through the accreditation self-study, team visit, and Commission action. If you do not have the name of your liaison, you can obtain it from the Commission office. This individual can prove a valuable resource as you formulate your initial plan for the self-study.

If you do not already have copies of the current *Handbook on Accreditation*, you should get one. It is available from:

North Central Association of Colleges and Schools
Commission on Institutions of Higher Education
30 N. LaSalle Street, Suite 2400
Chicago, IL 60602
(FAX (312) 263-7462)

This book contains excellent instructions for planning and executing the self-study process. If there is one general rule to follow, it is to plan ahead. You cannot make out too many schedules and timelines.

An important consideration early on is designating a central editor/writer who also coordinates drafts, attends meetings, serves on the Steering Committee, and provides uniformity in the final document. OSU chose to hire a graduate student in the Technical Writing Program to meet these criteria.

Once you have reviewed the General Institutional Requirements and Criteria for Accreditation you will be familiar with the information that must be included in the report. The challenge is to design a self-study process that will capture the necessary information.

Upon first glance, it might appear that committees could be formed to address each of the GIRs or Criteria. Depending on the size and organization of your institution, this might work. In our case this was not deemed a good choice. Instead, we formed a steering committee that consisted of representatives from many areas of the campus.

Steering Committee and Task Force Composition

Our main objective was to include enough expertise on the steering committee that no area of activity would be overlooked in the self-study. Our steering committee included the Vice Presidents of Student Services, Business and Finance, and Research; the Associate Vice President for Multicultural Affairs; the Dean of Undergraduate Studies; the Dean of the Libraries; the Associate Deans of the Graduate College and the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources; the Director of University Extension; the Director of University Assessment; the Director of Student Academic Services for the College of Arts and Sciences; two professors; one department head; representatives from the University Foundation and the Alumni Association; the Athletic Director; the Chair of Faculty Council; a graduate student; and the President of the Student Government Association.

The real work of the self-study was done by task forces assigned to cover smaller areas within the university. We decided on the following task forces (bulleted) grouped beneath related subject areas (bolded).

- **Administrative Review**
  - Governance and Administration
  - Administrative Review
- **Instruction and Research**
  - Each of the six academic colleges plus the College of Veterinary Medicine
  - The University Center at Tulsa
  - The Honors Program
  - Improving Academic Program Quality
  - Graduate Education
  - Research and Scholarship

- **Extension and Outreach**
  - University Extension
  - University Relations and Public Affairs
  - The OSU Foundation
  - The OSU Alumni Association
- **Academic Resources and Experiences**
  - The University Library
  - Information Technology
  - Academic Support Systems and Services
  - Student Services and Students
  - Multiculturalism
  - Intercollegiate Athletics
- **Financial and Physical Plant Resources**
  - Financial and Physical Plant Resources

Task force members included two vice presidents, two associate vice presidents, two deans, 21 associate deans, 50 directors, 17 department heads, two librarians, four managers, five graduate students, 29 undergraduate students, 56 faculty members, the registrar, and 13 other staff members.

Start-Up Information to Offer the Task Forces

Designate one person to set up a clearinghouse notebook for all data requested, interviews scheduled, and resource room materials needed. All of this information is then funneled through this individual to avoid any duplication of efforts. Task Force Chairs can review the notebook at any time to see if one of the other groups has data or information already in hand.

Offer specific training sessions for the Task Forces at least a year-and-a-half in advance of the actual visit. For example, we found that offering information in the following areas saved a tremendous amount of time and confusion during the writing process.

- **Information Sheets for the Task Forces explaining:**
  - what GIRs to address in their section of the report
  - the Criteria for Accreditation
  - the concerns they must address from the last accreditation review
  - the need to begin thinking about, and requesting, any faculty/staff/student surveys early
- **Detailing all content and structural specifics for the report:**
  - including concise overview paragraphs
  - providing clear conclusions
  - designating single or double spaced/font types/program/platform
  - using content specific headings
  - unifying the use of visuals/programs/labeling/integrating techniques

Providing a Clear Calendar of Due Dates for Drafts

The charge given to each task force was to respond to any concerns in the previous self-study, to review the changes that had occurred within their area during the past decade, to assess their present status and indicate future directions that their unit might take.

Deadlines for first, second, and final drafts of documents were set and shared with the task forces and task force chairs. Whenever possible, reports were exchanged in electronic form to alleviate 1) the paper crunch and 2) the transfer of viruses via disks.

Conclusion

You are off to a good start by beginning your planning well before the report is due. With attention to good management and training, you will achieve the objectives of the self-study process. That is, you will guide the campus community in reviewing its activities since the last review. By addressing future goals, the self-study can serve as a strategic planning tool for your institution. Combined, these factors add up to a successful accreditation project.

Becky Johnson is Dean of Undergraduate Studies, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, OK.

Terry Zambon is a Technical Writer based in Muncie, IN.

Utilizing an Institutional Self-Study Guide: A Major Aid In Organizing the Self-Study Process

Frederick E. Stahl
Chris Ferguson

Paradise Valley Community College is one of ten community colleges comprising the Maricopa County Community College system in Phoenix, Arizona. The college was formed in 1987 as the eighth college in the system. PVCC serves the north-central portion of Maricopa County, an area that encompasses portions of the cities of Glendale, Phoenix, Scottsdale, Cave Creek, and Carefree. Small businesses, light industry, service trades, and tourism are major contributors to the economy of the service area. The college enrolls approximately 5,600 credit students each semester.

The current self-study process for accreditation followed the college's receipt of an initial five years of accreditation, the maximum allowed for new institutions receiving initial accreditation. The institution faced the typical issues confronting new and developing institutions in their first decade of service, including several opportunities for improvement noted by the evaluation team.

Several challenges faced the college as it moved into the accreditation process. The first two challenges are ones common to many institutions. First, the self-study process is not based on a cycle of repetitive activities that afford the opportunity for continued improvement. Several years elapse between studies, making each study appear to be an individual effort. Second, while the goals of an NCA self-study are clear, the process by which they are achieved is not. Objective guidelines must be developed to accomplish the study's purposes.

The next three challenges were unique to PVCC. The third challenge involved an exchange of administrative teams between PVCC and a sister college and presented the challenge of two unfamiliar groups (new administration and existing faculty/staff) working to achieve a common goal. A fourth challenge was that study leaders from the previous NCA visit were no longer working at the college or were engaged in major instructional innovations that would not allow them to focus their energies on the self-study process. Finally, there was a sense and agreement that the self-study would provide an excellent opportunity for the college to coalesce as administrators, faculty, and staff forged a strong ongoing relationship.

Although the task of self-study was daunting, it became clear that the opportunities for institutional growth were immense. A structure or guide was needed to assure that the college participants received the most benefit for their efforts.

In spring, 1993, the college President appointed Chris Ferguson, a professor of English, as the North Central Self-Study Coordinator, and Frederick Stahl, PVCC's dean of instruction, to assist as a co-chair of the North Central Self-Study. The two individuals developed a draft schedule of activities that would culminate with an evaluation team visit in the spring of 1995, an interim organizational structure, and a list of potential committee chairs who would join the coordinators in attendance at the 1993 North Central Annual Meeting.

After attending the Annual Meeting and gaining a foundational understanding of the self-study process and carefully reviewing previous college self-study materials and reports, the steering committee determined that it should construct and utilize a formal institutional self-study guide. This guide would serve as a major aid to faculty and staff in organizing and conducting an effective self-study process. In addition to guiding institutional efforts, the guide would provide a vehicle to discuss, organize, and delineate the role of the Self-Study Coordinator, the members of the college steering committee, and proposed NCA self-study committees. The guide also stimulated the formation of written procedures for conducting the study and a compendium of basic resources such as editorial guidelines and a bibliography of key external resources for use by committee members.

The final guide contained the major components that are listed and discussed below.

Timeline

The timeline for the North Central Association self-study and visit was framed within the context of two dates: the projected time of the evaluation visit and the actual date when a Self-Study Coordinator and steering committee were appointed. The resultant timeline encompassed a twenty-six month period and emphasized important benchmarks such organization of the study, college wide kick-off, submission dates for draft chapters, committee and college-wide review of chapter content, final editing, printing, submission to the Commission, and the evaluation team visit. This one page overview assured that there was adequate time to conduct a thorough self-evaluation and guided committee chairs and steering team members in terms of "time on task."

Job Descriptions and Organizational Responsibilities

Members of the steering committee drafted and circulated a three-page document that outlined the responsibilities of the Self-Study Coordinator and the steering committee, the proposed organizational structure for the study, the primary responsibilities of each committee and committee chair, and the generic responsibility of committee members. The committee incorporated suggested changes and clarifications. College staff members then utilized this information to self-nominate for committee memberships and responsibilities.

The document incorporated into the self-study guide includes the organizational structure, a list of key committees and their responsibilities, and a membership roster. Individuals with special assignments, e.g., editing or resource support, were noted in a special section. This component became a quick and easily-referenced source for anyone who needed information regarding either the broad organization of the report or designation of responsible parties.

Resources

The steering team determined at the first Commission Meeting that an incredible array of resources existed to aid the college in the conduct of the self-study. The committee identified eleven documents as important foundational resources. These documents were obtained and placed in the reserve section of the learning resource center.

North Central Commission publications provide invaluable information and resources for study committees. In order to make the most critical information easily available to everyone, the steering committee abstracted, compiled, and "cut and pasted" important statements and definitions in the study guide. Included verbatim were the Criteria for Accreditation, which were bold faced and encapsulated. Commentary was abstracted and bulleted. The intent was to present exact, concise information whose essence could be easily grasped and retained in a short period of time.

In addition to the five criteria, the steering committee capsulized such important concepts as definitions of "purpose" and "consistent," "necessary," "educational purposes," "other purposes," and "integrity"; the meaning of key phrases such as "appropriate to an institution of higher education" and "strengthening educational effectiveness"; and important concepts, such as planning and assessment. As committee work commenced, steering committee members made frequent use of this section of the guide to assure mutual understanding of terms and concepts.

Procedures

The steering committee also drafted a set of nine procedures for use by each committee. These procedures are set in the chronological order in which they would logically occur. Again, as the self-study process evolved, this simple list of procedures assisted committee chairpersons and members to achieve appropriate tasks in a consistent manner and simplified the work of the steering committee and Self-Study Coordinator.

Guidelines

In addition to a simple set of procedures, the institutional self-study guide incorporated guidelines on methodology, data collection, and evaluation. This component of the document included a series of questions to guide and facilitate discussions on data, an abstract of criteria to utilize in selecting, administering, and interpreting surveys, and an overview of possible sources and resources that were readily available on campus.

A very critical section of the guide contained writing and editorial guidelines to guide the committees in the writing of the report. A foundational assumption of this section was that each committee report should be framed in such a manner as to be able to " stand alone" and be comprehensible and meaningful. To assure consistency, the guide included a standard format and an outline of elements to be included in each report. The Self-Study Coordinator developed several simple suggestions and practical illustrations on such items as point of view, voice, and tone to assist members of the committees. Finally, committee decisions on such "mechanical" items as documentation, abbreviations, numbering, illustration, and spacing were capsulized.

As committees progressed into the drafting of their reports and recommendations, the guidelines referencing format, voice, tone, and point of view provided strong basic guidance. The more technical guidelines dealing with format provided assistance to members of the word processing staff who formatted drafts of the document for committee and team review.

Organizational Structure

Paradise Valley Community College chose to use a very traditional organizational structure for the content of its report. Obviously, institutional situations vary significantly, and there are many circumstances that justify or even demand the use of less orthodox structures than those utilized by the steering committee at Paradise Valley Community College. The committee organized the report by criteria, prefacing these five chapters with an introductory overview and an institutional update that addressed both the institution's responses to previous NCA concerns and major changes that had occurred at the institution since the 1990 NCA visit. A brief summary followed the chapter on institutional integrity (Criterion Five.)

Again, the inclusion of a two-page draft outline allowed members of the steering committee, committee chairs, and the college community as a whole to easily grasp the framework and contents of the proposed Self-Study Report. As the study progressed, committees and the steering team made minor modifications to the outline, but its broad outline proved functional and useful in the organization of the final document.

Patterns of Evidence

The members of the steering committee considered Commission information on the patterns of evidence to be so critical that the material concerning possible sources of evidence for each criterion was printed verbatim in the guide. The steering committee co-chairs reviewed the possible sources of evidence for each criterion with the chairperson of the college committee responsible for structuring the report on that criterion and developed a preliminary strategy to assure that the committee would have basic understanding of the meaning of the criterion, and the types of evidence that were available or could be developed for use in assuring the college's adherence to the standards implicit in the criterion.

As they conducted assessments and evaluations and began the process of structuring their narrative reports, committee members used the listings as check points to expand their deliberations and to assure that all critical issues relating to the criterion were being fully examined and evaluated.

The Final Report

The Paradise Valley Self-Study Guide did not contain a specific section on the final editorial revision of the draft document to assure consistency in style and mechanics. The steering committee considered but did not include in the document a flow chart of activities that began with the committees turning in final drafts of their chapters to the Self-Study Coordinator, continued with editorial readings and stylistic modifications to assure consistency and flow, and ended with a final reading by committee chairs to assure that the general contents, analytical framework, and specific commentaries on strengths and challenges were not substantively modified in the editing process.

The self-study guide also contained no specific guidelines on the final presentation of the report itself. In the case of PVCC, expertise on the technicalities of printing the final report existed among members of the steering committee. However, it may be a valuable consideration for colleges to outline options for printing the final report with the knowledge of printing options available both on and off campus.

Additionally, the decision to use reproductions from the Warren and Jo Buxton Collection of Native American Art in illustrating the cover and separation pages in the document emerged as a spontaneous idea during a discussion of unique characteristics of the college. The opportunity to use this distinctive and unifying theme individualized the report while highlighting a distinctive art collection at the college.

Summary

In summary, the institutional Self-Study Guide provided a framework that outlined a two-year study process, simplified reference procedures by extrapolating pertinent information, delineated responsibility and anticipated as many concerns as the steering committee could foresee.

In addition, the guide provided the NCA liaison to PVCC a preview of report organization and form. Early in the study and periodically throughout the process, guidance and suggestions were provided by NCA staff as a result of the guide.

Since the NCA self-study is not a repetitive process and in the case of PVCC former self-study leadership was not available, the guide provided the objective steps to achieve the final goal of reaccreditation.

The college was granted continued accreditation with the next comprehensive evaluation in ten years. In addition, an excellent working relationship was forged between the new administrative team and the existing faculty and staff. Perhaps the most important outcome of the self-study has been PVCC's growth from an emerging institution to one poised to begin its second decade confident in its ability to achieve an important mission. While the institutional self-study guide cannot be credited for all of these accomplishments, it served to set the tone and parameters for a successful NCA visit.

Frederick E. Stahl is Dean of Instruction, Paradise Valley Community College, Phoenix, AZ.

Chris Ferguson is a member of the English Faculty, Paradise Valley Community College, Phoenix, AZ.

Appendix A.

Coordinating the North Central Self-Study Process: Six Pieces of Practical Advice to Ease the Task

Being a North Central Self-Study Coordinator is one of the most challenging roles that many college staff members face in their careers. Based upon our experiences in coordinating the most recent Self-Study at Paradise Valley Community College, we offer the following advice for new and continuing Self-Study Coordinators to make the role easier and more fulfilling. Hopefully, these comments will help Self-Study Coordinators have a positive, successful self-study experience.

Find and utilize a self-study mentor

The role of Self-Study Coordinator is a difficult one for many reasons. First, the role of the coordinator is usually perceived as a "one time," interim function, with the majority of functions to be performed over a twenty-four to thirty-six month period. Few coordinators serve in the role more than once or twice in their professional careers because of its demanding nature and because most institutions undertake the entire accreditation process only once every five to eight years.

Moreover, a self-study process itself does not consist of continuously repetitive activities that facilitate a cycle of continuous, incremental improvements. There are infrequent opportunities to apply new insights and improve processes and procedures utilized in earlier self-studies.

Finally, while the coordinator's basic goals may be clear, there are few objective guidelines for their accomplishment. The uniqueness of each institution demands that coordinators must rely on individual judgment and persuasive abilities to accomplish myriad, analytic tasks involving every institutional constituency in order to produce a document that accurately reflects an institution's mission, its achievements, and its potential for the future.

Given these complex factors, we recommend that whenever possible, a Self-Study Coordinator should be teamed with a mentor who has had previous experience as the coordinator of a self-study or as a consultant-evaluator for the North Central Association.

Such an individual can provide continuity in an interim situation, offer valuable historical insights and personal experiences regarding Commission requirements and any recent modifications, i.e., the recently adopted criterion on ethical values; and share perspectives on issues as broad as the organization of the study or as focused as the interpretation of a survey. A mentor can serve as an "at-large" member of a self-study steering team at the Annual Meeting, attending a variety of carefully selected topical workshops that complement the foundational sessions on process and criteria. This frees steering team members to focus on workshops dealing with criteria and allows the Self-Study Coordinator to focus on relating the broad aspects of the self-study process to a specific institutional setting. The mentor can also work with the Self-Study Coordinator and the steering team members to assure that a broad, consistent conceptual framework for the study evolves and is followed throughout development of the self-study document itself. Finally, a mentor can provide invaluable assistance in serving as a logistical facilitator for the evaluation team at the time of its visit.

Focus on the Big Picture

A coordinator must never lose sight of the "big picture." The coordinator and steering committee must consider "What are the things that set us apart from other institutions ?"; "What are the things that we really value?". Once this identity or focus becomes clear the committee must ask: "How are we demonstrating that we are doing these things and that we can continue to do them?"; and, "How does statement "a"/practice "b"/strength "c"/weakness "d"/situation "e"/ relate to our overall vision of the institution and the conceptual framework of our study?"

The most important role of the steering team is to provide and present an evaluative framework in the context of the college's past, its current status, and its projected achievements. Working with the steering team, the coordinator must assure that the vision of the college presented to the evaluation team is focused and clear. The coordinator(s) must orchestrate the linkages between the numerous individual components being evaluated by various committees to assure that the institutional analysis is consistent and accurate. The Self-Study Coordinator(s) must facilitate discussions among committees that assure coherence. A coordinator must draft transitional statements that serve as the connective tissue in the self-study's conceptual framework and must frequently edit or rewrite sections of the study to provide consistent voice.

Involve Everyone

Ultimate success demands full utilization of college staff, students, and members of the community. It is critically important to involve all levels and types of staff members. These include not only obvious constituencies such as full-time faculty, administrators, and professional support staff, but such overlooked groups as adjunct faculty and the members of janitorial, grounds, and maintenance departments.

Several benefits accrue from utilizing the entire college staff. First, it helps to assure that individual committees and subcommittees will attain broad and varied perspectives on issues and concerns. Secondly, involvement promotes understanding of the college and comfort with the integrity of the self-study process and its purposes. Involvement and engagement also assure that ownership and responsibility for both process and the Self-Study Report itself are distributed and accepted throughout the institution. Finally, the evaluation team will interview randomly. The team will select individuals who represent a range of functions and interests at the college. Widespread, serious involvement of as many individuals as possible maximizes the opportunity for everyone to support the evaluation process and strengthen the institution.

For the same reasons, we advise widespread student and alumni involvement in the self-study process. Students provide the primary *raison d'etre* for our institutional existence. Their documented achievements are a major concern of the self-study and evaluative process. In addition to the fact that students and alumni are certain to be a focus group on any evaluation team's agenda, their involvement and unique perceptions will increase the depth and breadth of evaluators' perceptions concerning a variety of critical issues.

A third important constituency that should be included is members of the college's service area, its community. The rationale remains the same as for comprehensive involvement of staff and students. Given the heavy time commitment involved in the self-study process, it may be impossible to involve community members in much of the routine committee work. However, through the selective use of advisory committee members and with the cooperation of the college President, existing community organizations and individuals who have a clear stake in the college's goals and achievements can be utilized to review mission statements, chapter drafts, lists of strengths and challenges, and the college's plan for the future. In addition, such individuals can provide a valuable external perspective on the study's conceptual framework and its conclusions.

Construct and Adhere to a Timeline

The self-study process is a complex process. It involves myriad tasks and a large number of individuals and groups whose efforts must be coordinated on an ongoing basis. We recommend using two dates in constructing a timeline. The first is the projected date for the institutional visit by a team of consultant-evaluators. The second is the date on which the self-study chairperson and steering committee begin their assignments. Utilizing these dates, the committee can construct a calendar of activities for the period of the self-study, assure that there is adequate time for the conduct of a thorough self-evaluation. The calendar can be used to guide steering team and committee members in terms of "time on task." Finally, by consulting the calendar and a subsequently developed list of accomplished tasks, key participants can assess progress at a glance and make necessary modifications in plans and activities.

Use Surveys and Statistics Liberally and Wisely

Materials from the Commission include a selected listing of surveys and data sources that have proven useful in the preparation of institutional self-study reports. In addition, many college research offices maintain historical files of surveys administered, data attained, and analyses rendered. Numerous organizations offer both standardized and specially prepared instruments that may provide assistance to self-study committees.

Given the challenge of selecting and using surveys and interpreting data effectively, we advise that all surveys be previewed and assessed by the self-study steering team before implementation. If the college has a research officer, this individual can provide valuable assistance in selecting and evaluating surveys, in collecting data, and in analyzing and interpreting results.

It is important to do everything possible to attain a representative response from all areas and levels of the institution. In addition, survey data must be thoroughly and objectively analyzed. Resulting conclusions and selected charts and tables can then be used liberally throughout the document. Correlating data and using statistics to offer meaningful support to observations and conclusions in the report is integral to the success of the self-study process.

Be Honest and Forthright

The last piece of advice that we offer is perhaps the most important consideration in developing the self-study. Deal with difficult, controversial, or negative issues in an objective, forthright manner. It is important to be as factual and comprehensive as possible in dealing with every situation. In some instances, the total context of an event or all of the considerations that have led to a determination or decision may not be apparent. In others, there may be divergent interpretations of circumstances. Frequently, steering committees initially feel that certain pieces of ambiguous or negative information should be eliminated from a Self-Study Report. We recommend both avoiding speculation and rejecting any proposals that attempt to provide the evaluation team with less than full and comprehensive disclosure. Self-identification of challenges in the self-study avoids surprises for the evaluation team and the possibility of embarrassment to the institution when a situation comes to the fore during an evaluation team visit. Self identification of challenges, problems, or historical errors and misjudgments, when combined with a possible solution or identified correction, adds credence to the thoroughness and integrity of the self-study process. One of the major purposes of an evaluation visit is to assure that an institution has looked carefully and thoughtfully at both its potentialities and challenges. By dealing objectively and consistently with all of the important issues, the self-study prepares the evaluation team to offer its best guidance and counsel to an institution. Moreover, it prepares the institution to deal with the future from a position of strength.

In a brief paper, it is impossible to offer advice on many unique institutional situations. During our session with continuing Self-Study Coordinators, we hope to draw on both our own experiences and those of the other persons present to deal with any areas of concern that coordinators raise in order to complement these core observations.

Shaping the Evaluation Process: Committees, University Forums, Resource Room, and Site Visit Schedule

Joseph A. Walsh
Edward I. Sidlow
Joan Steinbrecher
Marian A. Claffey

Context

Loyola University Chicago is a private, urban, independent university of nine colleges, five campuses and 14,000 students. Its decennial site visit occurred in March, 1995, eighteen months after a new president was installed, succeeding a president of 23 years tenure.

Creating Pertinent Committees and Helping Them to Function Effectively

During the 24 month period prior to the site visit we found that our priorities and, in fact, our jobs were redefined. Those most intimately involved with the preparations for our reaccreditation found themselves serving within a committee structure that, while imperfect, kept matters relevant to reaccreditation in a position of proper alignment with that time frame.

At Loyola, we designated four committees to meet our reaccreditation needs. A university level committee on assessment, chaired by the Vice President for Academic Affairs, was established two years before our visit. That committee was primarily comprised of administrative personnel and wrote the university assessment plan that was delivered to the colleges. After the assessment effort was well under way, and colleges and departments had their own assessment plans drafted and undergoing an established approval process. This committee, now chaired by the Director of Academic Affairs and including the Self-Study Coordinator, became the Accreditation Steering Committee. Simply stated, it was the charge of this group to anticipate and act on all of the administrative details surrounding the upcoming site visit.

Helping to accomplish this objective was a third committee—the Academic Priorities Committee—which is a standing committee of the university staffed by at least one faculty representative from each college. For the two years referenced here, the charge to this committee was to review and approve each proposed mission, goals, and assessment plan package of the forty-five discrete academic units of the university. This committee was chaired in the second year by the Self-Study Coordinator.

Our fourth committee was an *ad hoc* Accreditation Review Committee established specifically, again, with representatives from each of the nine colleges, and charged with review and recommendation concerning each unit's self-study document and, ultimately, the same role in regard to the university-wide self-study. Members of this committee also functioned as liaisons to their respective colleagues concerning all self-study issues and processes.

These structures worked reasonably well, primarily because the Self-Study Coordinator was an active participant on each of the bodies, chairing two of the three committees that remained for the year before the visit. His participation on all of these groups ensured that none of the committees was working in a vacuum, or was in any significant way unaware of what the other committees were doing.

Open Forums for Self-Study Discussion

The steering committee had several goals for the self-study process and high among these was that of effective communication to all parts of the university. Numerous newspaper articles—in faculty and staff as well as student newspapers—was one methodology for this. Personal visits by assessment committee members to each academic unit and by the self- study coordinator to each college was a second.

A third approach was to hold a public forum on four of the five campuses (the fifth campus in Rome was not visited–alas!) The purpose of these sessions was to provide a setting for any member of the university community to comment and raise questions about a penultimate draft of the university-wide self-study. Draft versions were available to all university officers, deans, faculty, staff, and student councils via library circulation and on-line. Present at these forums were the Self-Study Coordinator, the chair of the steering committee, the senior vice president/dean of faculties, whose office held final authority on this project, and the executive vice president.

This effort ultimately served more of a symbolic than real purpose, since attendance at these sessions was very sparse, averaging fewer than 15 persons. The effort, however, did not go unrecognized or unappreciated. At no time in this process did complaints surface concerning failure to communicate about or invite participation in the self-study effort.

The Resource Room

The resource room was conceptualized as an "operations central" for the actual NCA site visit. It was designed to catalogue all the specific items referenced in the self-study but not sent to the evaluation team in advance. Illustrations of such items were: the original self-studies of each university academic, administrative, and support unit; the confirming documents for the General Institutional Requirements (GIRs); affiliation documents concerning the two colleges Loyola had affiliated with in the past three years; catalogues, promotional materials and handbooks on each college; assessment plans for each academic unit; and a copy of the most recent prior university self-study.

The physical and organizational structure of the resource room also received specific attention. Location, size, clerical and organizing resources, and comfort each seemed important. Loyola's recent prior experience in a focused site visit (regarding the new college affiliations) proved useful to the understanding of these concerns.

A central consideration in the planning for the resource room was making it easy to use. Members of the steering committee who were specifically selected to organize this project conducted dry-runs in order to refine the ease of access that we all wanted as a characterizing quality of this resource.

Five basic assumptions guided the preparatory work on the resource room:

1. that time is at an utmost premium to evaluation team members during the visit;
2. that if information included in the resource room is to be useful, it should be complete and its location obvious;
3. that one or more members of the evaluation team might wish to have easy access to technology such as a personal computer and printer or facsimile machine while on campus;
4. that nothing works until it has been "road tested"; and
5. to not underestimate the time and effort needed to make this simple concept of a resource room into a truly effective and efficient aid.

Creating a Viable Site Visit Schedule

Quite candidly, scheduling our visit posed the greatest challenge to our diplomatic skills, which were clearly on the wane as the visit approached. The simple fact is that everybody involved would like to control the visit agenda, yet indeed that authority really rests with the Evaluation Team Chair. Loyola has four campuses spread throughout Chicago and transportation between/among them is difficult. In some respects, the chair was dependent on our knowledge of how to move people among campuses. In turn, those of us who were charged with orchestrating the visit were very dependent on the good will of our own colleagues to shuttle visitors between campuses at the inclination of the team. Given Chicago traffic, this was not always easy.

We submitted a tentative schedule to the Team Chair that he seemed to like until three days before the visit and then he faxed wholesale changes. The original agenda, covering a full two day period and 13 visitors, already had been circulated to our faculty and staff as a draft and they began planning for the tightly scheduled visit that we had envisioned. Wrong! The team demanded flexibility to the extent that we were scheduling appointments for visitors from the moment our Entrance Interview ended through the evening hours after the first full day of the visit. In short, the visitors dictated about 75% of the schedule and we were forced to rely on our faculty and administration to remain flexible.

There is no simple solution to the scheduling issue, but we were fortunate in at least two of ways. First, our Executive Vice President made it crystal clear that key personnel were to keep their schedules clear and not plan travel during the visit dates. Second, the Loyola community was very cooperative and recognized the importance of this enterprise, doing all they could do to help things flow smoothly.

The single most important advice we would offer to others preparing for a site visit is to be in constant communication with their university community. Newsletters, articles in university publications, information sessions, and blanket e-mail messages—to the point of seeming redundancy—will serve to keep the larger community in a state of preparedness. Equally as critical would be that all those involved be advised to keep their sense of humor!

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Establishing the Foundation for a Successful Self-Study

Carole Bulakowski
Eibhlin Glennon

Congratulations on being asked to serve as Self-Study Coordinator. While the challenges facing you are many, you will finish the process with new perspectives about your college and how its many parts work together to serve students. Here are some key strategies that should help you to establish a solid foundation for a successful self-study.

From the very beginning, there should be broad representation among all constituent groups at your college. This can start at the organizational stage. At College of Lake County, the responsibility of the production of the self-study was shared by a faculty member and an administrator. While an administrator coordinated all of the meetings, planned related agenda, and collected necessary reports, our faculty member was included from the beginning of the process by attending all meetings, writing the plan for the self-study, and editing much of the self-study. We also attended several of the NCA meetings together to achieve a better understanding of what needed to be included in a self-study. These meetings helped us realize that this report would need to have a more analytical focus than the one completed ten years ago.

The self-study plan was designed in a question format and organized according to the five NCA criteria and their patterns of evidence. This format made it easier for the committees to understand the criteria and which topics needed to be addressed.

As the steering committee is being formed, membership should reflect all categories of employees. When selecting members of your steering committee, remember to include and solicit input from the leaders within your various employee groups. Our college's governance system includes four Senates that represent three groups of staff and the students. The chairs of those Senates assisted us in the selection of our steering committee members. Consider as well those individuals' ability to interact with the other steering committee members and their interest in staying connected to their peer group. It is also important to ensure that these employees represent a broad base across campus so that no academic divisions or departments are unrepresented. Our five major committees were formed to focus on the NCA criteria and were co-chaired by an administrator and a faculty member. Students are also critical members to include on the steering committees and subcommittees. In addition, a member of the Board of Trustees and members of the community provide very valuable insights that enhance the breadth and depth of the final document. Having a member of the Executive Staff was also very valuable for our self-study because that experience and expertise ensured that the report reflected an accurate, comprehensive view of the college. Of course, if any individuals on your campus have been consultant-evaluators, their views and experience would also enhance the self-study. Furthermore, if your groups are diverse in every way, i.e., age, gender, ethnicity, etc., a broad view of the college will be reflected within your self-study. Finally, it is critical to include members of the Institutional Research Office to assist you in your collection of relevant reports, provide accurate analysis of institutional data, and review the final draft of the self-study.

Secondly, it is important to keep the campus community apprised of your progress throughout the self-study process. Multiple opportunities for communication exist. Informational updates can be given in group meetings every semester. Steering committee representatives from the various employee groups can join you in these sessions. We arranged such meetings with full- and part-time faculty, administrators, specialist and classified staff, and students on a regular basis. It was also important for us as a community college to have meetings with members of our General Advisory Council. These meetings provide an important opportunity to share information and findings as they develop and to listen to the questions of the attendees. They also are valuable teaching moments that help your students and staff understand what accreditation means to the college.

Use your college's other systems of communication such as employee and student newsletters, electronic mail, etc. In these situations, employees and students are becoming more familiar with NCA's relationship to the college, its standards, and the purpose of the NCA evaluation team while on campus.

Since you will not be able to talk personally to every employee, we recommend that you develop some type of research tool to assess the college community's perceptions on how your college meets North Central's requirements. Collecting this information can have two-fold benefits. The process will give *all employees* an opportunity to share their ideas and perceptions about the college. It will also demonstrate that you value their opinions. In addition, the results can help you identify some of the college's strengths and weaknesses that may need further study.

It is critical to give students opportunities to express their views about the college. Such meetings can provide valuable insights in areas where improvements are needed. In addition, surveying students in a variety of types of classes will become another important source of information on student satisfaction.

Lastly, plan ahead. Even though we started two years ahead of time, we quickly discovered that we needed every day to get the job done well. Multiple drafts were shared with our steering committee and other interested staff. Some people needed extra time to read their sections. Input from various individuals improved the comprehensiveness and quality of the self-study. Collecting and organizing information for the appendices and Basic Institutional Data forms took more time than we had expected. Additional time will also be needed to collect updated numbers of budget balances, employee demographics, and student enrollments. Having extra time also helps when you must respond to new criteria and patterns of evidence. Clarifying the elements of these issues and how they relate to your college can take more time to explore and resolve. Starting early also gives you time to begin working on some issues. It may be a pleasant discovery to learn that some concerns can be easily addressed and resolved before your team's visit.

Ultimately, the self-study and appendices were completed and sent to our evaluation team for response. We were confident the documents reflected a broad perspective of the college and demonstrated that the college staff and students could collaborate to produce a comprehensive, quality document. Ultimately, we expect that this process will result in an improved educational climate for students.

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Is Your Sidebar Showing?

Gary D. Schultz
Gracemary Melvin

Introduction

Colby Community College is a comprehensive two-year institution serving more than 2,000 students in its 14-county service area of northwestern Kansas. The college played host to a NCA evaluation visit in September 1994 and received continued accreditation with the next comprehensive evaluation scheduled for 2004.

The Self-Study Report

As the introduction to a TV show or commercial states, "Inquiring minds want to know." Your evaluation team wants to know, and the Self-Study Report may be the first exposure to your college. How creative have you been? Newspapers and magazines are changing constantly in their delivery through font, size, and style of their articles. They have made it easier for the reader to direct their attention to the "meat" of their message. Have you?

Colleges have numerous options when packaging their Self-Study Reports. Certainly, there is required information that the North Central Association expects in this important evaluative, analytical, and descriptive document. We are reminded that the Self-Study Report not only reflect our last team visit, but also document the institution's meeting of the General Institutional Requirements and Criteria for Accreditation and honestly evaluate the institution's strengths and weaknesses. We are left to our own initiative—and we might add, our own creativeness—when it comes to the actual design of the Self Study Report.

Every institution of higher education goes about its business of supplying an educational process for its students in a manner that is unique to that college or university. Often, we do not take care to present a case for our particular culture through the development of the Self-Study Report. We are distinct and different in our delivery of services. Yet, many Self-Study Reports lack creativity when it comes to their formatting and presentation style.

For a moment, let us put ourselves in the shoes of our evaluation team members. This is possibly their first impression of your college. What are those impressions as they read your study? Are you an impersonal and cold institution or are you a vibrant, energetic, and enthusiastic group of individuals who seek to deliver a sound educational process that is student-centered? Merely supplying the needed information regarding the last evaluation, the General Institutional Requirements, the five Criteria, and evaluation of present services might not demonstrate your style, your culture, and your vibrancy.

Not only do you want to demonstrate your "culture" but you also want to prove your case in the required aspects of the self-study. Do you make it easy for the readers to identify your compliance with the requirements? Or, do they have to search the document for examples of meeting those requirements? For example, will the readers be directed to a specific section describing the faculty's role in developing curriculum or will they have to search the study?

Consultant-Evaluators are busy individuals and do not want to spend non-productive time in reading your Self-Study Report. They deserve to be "lead" in their reading. They will appreciate some Tables and Charts, but will tire quickly if the number of such becomes inordinate. In addition, they will value fair size print along with space between your lines. They may even enjoy having print on only one side of each page or sidebar space to make notations.

Finally, we need to remember the reasons for the published Self Study (there is an excellent checklist on p 94 of the NCA *Handbook*). First, it is a written report of your evaluative exercise. Second, it is a written report of your compliance with the Criteria, General Institutional Requirements, and your reactions to the recommendations from the last visit. Third, it describes the institution. Your evaluation team will formulate impressions from reading your report. In turn, they will seek to confirm those impressions upon their arrival on your campus. Have you given them enough assistance?

Conclusion

At every meeting of the Steering Committee at Colby Community College, we reminded our various committee chairs and our editor that our Self-Study Report was to read like a book and not like a dissertation. We brainstormed on numerous occasions as to the format as well as unique methods to present our culture.

As a result, our Self-Study Report incorporated the use of sidebars that explained, when appropriate, that a paragraph spoke to a General Institutional Requirement. Additionally, we used no. 14 print, a limited Appendix, double spacing, and Times font. We reduced our draft from more than 300 pages to a final copy of 220 pages. Our goal was to lead the reader to the "meat."

A self-study committee member suggested the use of "Factoids" in our side-bars. The "Factoids" presented in the sidebars contained what we considered "facts" that would assist in proving our case as well as letting the reader in on our own special "culture." For example, when evaluating our pre-engineering program, the sidebar spoke to the number of students who received engineering scholarships upon transfer from Colby. In addition, when a particular paragraph mentioned a particular requirement for accreditation, we identified it as such in the sidebar.

Members of the steering committee wanted to enhance our Self-Study with a limited amount of art work. The art instructor, who served on the committee, volunteered to develop and format the study with wood carvings preceding various segments of the study with a logical and pictorial rendition of the area being discussed.

The Resource Room contained an additional booklet that served as an index to the required General Institutional Requirements and Criteria. The page number where each requirement was addressed in the Self Study along with the location of supplemental information found in the Resource Room was indexed.

If we were to do it over, we would reconsider the three-ring binder method that we used due to its physical size. Yet, we were very proud of the format and substance of our Self-Study. It represented the institution's honest effort at reporting our compliance, our evaluation of the college, and our desire to demonstrate that we were an enthusiastic and creative staff.

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Developing a Strategic Plan

Michael Kane
Larry Davidhizar
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The self-study report, culminating in a NCA team visit, should be a product of an ongoing planning process. When this planning process is in place in an institution, the Self-Study Report then becomes a "snapshot" of an ongoing self-study process. In a figurative sense, the Self-Study Report steps into a moving planning stream. For many institutions this self-study planning process is either not in place or it is not properly functioning. The self-study report, required for accreditation, provides an opportunity to begin or to resurrect an effective planning process.

The first step in a self-study report, a step that will not be specifically covered in the mentoring workshop, is the development of a strategic institutional plan.

A strategic plan is not an episodic event, but an ongoing process that is on a regular cycle or rotation. The actual cycle is determined by the institution, but it normally has aspects occurring annually, every three to five years, and perhaps even every ten years. The process itself is not just the means to an end, but part of the end itself.

The difference between strategic planning and other types of planning is its emphasis on the environment in which the institution is operating. Through strategic planning an institution attempts to discover how it fits and contributes in the larger external environmental as well as the internal environmental of the institution. It is by nature very comprehensive in its scope. Key questions asked in strategic planning relate to the institution's distinctives. Questions such as, "Who are we?" "Why do we exist?" "Should we exist?" "What do we do better than other similar institutions?" In our market, how would we and our publics rate ourselves? To be effective the process requires frank and honest appraisal of a reason for existence and if there are sufficient resources to carry out the mission.

Institutions do not operate without strategic plans. They already have one, whether it is written or unwritten. A written strategic plan will better serve the organization, unwritten ones tend to benefit a small segment within the organization. The strategic planning process can do a number of things for your organization. The process:

- builds community
- clarifies "hidden agendas"
- raises expectations
- focuses responsibilities
- gives a sense of direction
- facilitates a will to live in the present versus in past nostalgia
- facilitates effectiveness (doing the right things) & efficiency (doing things right)
- forms the basis for evaluation and team effort
- forms the basis for doing the Self-Study Report

Strategic Marketing Plan

Following is an outline of areas that need to be evaluated in a strategic marketing plan.

- *1A. Organizational Distinctives*
  - 1B. History–Over the Archives Building in Washington, D.C. is the phrase, "What is past is prologue."
    - 1C. Purposes
    - 2C. Beliefs/values
    - 3C. Basic Goals of Education
    - 3C. Practices
  - 2B. Publics
    - 1C. Funding
    - 2C. Influential
    - 3C. Regulatory
    - 4C. Supplier
- *2A. Environmental Analysis*
  - 1B. Internal Audit
    - 1C. Personnel
    - 2C. Fiscal
    - 3C. Physical
    - 4C. Overall Health
  - 2B. External Audit
    - 1C. Uncontrollable Variables
      - Political and Legal
      - Cultural and Social (generation X; urban/rural; demographic; etc.)
      - Economic
      - Geographic
      - Technological
      - Competitors
      - Private/Public
      - Denomination/Theological
      - Market Demand
    - 3C. Controllable Variables
      - Product
      - Place
      - Price
      - Promotion
- *3A. Position Summary*
  - 1B. Summary of Strengths and Limitations
  - 2B. Summary of Competitors Strengths and Limitations
  - 3B. Summary of Opportunities and Threats

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Chapter XI

Self-Study and Evaluation: Practical Advice

Community Involvement in Institutional Self-Study

Paul W. Batty
Christine Frances Briggs

As the American public demands greater accountability for educational practices, all institutions—both colleges and the associations that accredit them—must give more attention to the judgment of lay people, particularly those who support the institutions with their contributions or their taxes. To promote the participation of extramural community leaders in assessment of an institution's success challenges all Self-Study Coordinators.

Involving the service area community in the NCA self-study process is both necessary and practical, especially since the issues raised by the NCA accreditation process often demand a perspective from outside the college walls. Particularly in response to the NCA Criterion Four, "The institution can continue to accomplish its purposes and strengthen its educational effectiveness," representatives of the service district can provide relevant perspectives on issues such as institutional governance, financial stability, and student assessment. Just as advisory committees keep career programs in touch with current practices and needs in the industrial / technical/business communities, community-wide advisory committees can provide information and resources to assist colleges in evaluation and planning.

Membership of NCA Community Task Force

We recommend that Self-Study Steering Committees create a service-district-wide community task force to be a part of the regular assessment of the success of the institution. Such a committee should include representatives of significant local institutions (educational, industrial, business, social) and also be representative of the geographic and demographic populations of the area. To promote dialogue between the college constituencies and the community, the task force should also include faculty leaders and administrators, preferably residents of the district. We will use Henry Ford Community College's Citizen Commission on the Future of the College to illustrate how such a task force might be created and how the results of the task force's work contribute to the success of a self-study.

HFCC was scheduled for reaccreditation in 1995; hence, our self-study year was 1993-94. In September 1993, President Andrew A. Mazzara asked the Board of Trustees to authorize a "Citizen Commission on the Future of the College" and to charge that group to "investigate demographic, economic, and political factors which will affect HFCC's ability `to accomplish its purposes and strengthen its educational effectiveness,' and to recommend policy directions for best meeting those goals." A chairperson (representing the Chrysler Corporation and the auto industry) was appointed by the Board, and seventeen citizens, including a few HFCC faculty and administrators, were nominated by representative community groups (e.g., the Chamber of Commerce, the League of Women Voters, the public schools, the HFCC Alumni Association). In addition, three members of the Board of Trustees joined President Mazzara as ex-officio members of the commission.

Integration of Commission Report with College's Self-Study

The commission divided its tasks among three subcommittees:

- The **Resources and Fiscal Health** subcommittee's charge was
    - to study the institution's current resource base—financial, physical, and human; and

  - to ascertain the most appropriate organization and allocation of those resources to strengthen both the institution and its programs.

- The **Institutional Planning and Decision Making** subcommittee was charged to determine whether the institution had in place
  - decision-making processes with tested capability to address future challenges; and
  - plans—as well as ongoing, effective planning processes—necessary to the institution's continuance.
- The **Educational Assessment and Improvement** subcommittee's purpose was twofold:
  - to analyze assessment processes to ensure that they were continuous, involved a variety of institutional constituencies, and provided meaningful and useful information for students, faculty and administration; and
  - to identify how the institution could strengthen its educational programs.

Readers familiar with the NCA *Handbook of Accreditation* will recognize in the above charges the "patterns of evidence" supporting Criterion Four.

The subcommittees met frequently in December 1993 and January 1994 to gather information, to study their respective issues in depth, and to draft recommendations for consideration by the commission as a whole. After reviewing subcommittee reports in January, the commission drafted twenty-two recommendations that were presented to the Board of Trustees in February 1994. The commission's three-hundred page report formed a framework for the Self-Study Report on Criterion Four, and the commission's recommendations were included as an appendix in the final document. The Self-Study Steering Committee was particularly receptive to the recommendations of the citizen commission—given that both faculty leaders and the Instructional Vice Presidents had served on the advisory committee. The recommendations also became part of the college's strategic planning process in 1994, contributing to the institution's continuing service to the larger community.

Benefits of Community Involvement

When the NCA Consultant Evaluators came for their site visit in March 1995, commission members were prominent among the community representatives who impressed the team with their knowledge of and support for the college. Subsequently, one of the commission members, already familiar with college issues and prepared to support the strategic initiatives that had grown out of the self-study and reaccreditation process, was elected to the Board of Trustees.

In addition to its value in the self-study process, a community-wide advisory committee gives the institution the opportunity to tell its story to a significant public. Notable advantages of the community advisory committee were demonstrated by HFCC's experience in 1994-95. The major issue that the citizen commission considered was whether the college should separate from the K-14 school district in which it had operated for fifty-seven years. The commission recommended that even if the college remained part of the public school district (a practical necessity because of shared properties and limited size of the district), "the Board of Trustees should determine, as soon as possible, if enabling legislation could be enacted to permit the Board to ask district voters to approve a permanent, dedicated millage within the existing governmental structure." Prior to that time, the college had simply received a portion of the public school taxes. In 1994, when the Michigan legislature abolished local property taxes for support of public schools, it became critical for the continuation of Henry Ford Community College that such a dedicated millage be approved, and the groundwork, laid by commission members, and their active support of the campaign for long-term dedicated funding eased the passage of the millage referendum.

The citizen commission had also advocated that HFCC "set aside specific funds for technology." Building upon that recommendation, the Board of Trustees approved the creation of a technology service fee that generates approximately $400,000 a year for projects increasing student access to instructional technology. Competitive proposals are submitted by faculty and evaluated by a committee consisting of administration, faculty, and support staff. The final awards are approved by the HFCC President and the Board of Trustees. Without the endorsement of the citizen commission, the Board of Trustees might have been reluctant to levy a service fee in a year of budgetary restraints and to approve a shared governance approach to the allocation of fund resources in an era of public distrust of educators.

Although the Board vacancy and election, the millage campaign, and the technology investment fee could be construed as coincidental applications, they illustrate the point that a citizen commission task force creates strength and support for a college in the community—resources that may be drawn upon as needed. With the opportunity to interact positively with faculty and administration, community members are more likely to endorse the institution and to inform work associates and neighbors of the college's success with its programs and graduates. Finally, the formalized structure of the commission promotes the building of coalitions necessary to facilitate fiscal support for the institution.

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Using Quality Tools to Get Started with Your Self-Study

Carol Bartelt
Carol Mishler

Fox Valley Technical College's long history and experience with the practice of "quality" was never more important than when the College began its NCA self-study, approximately two years before the NCA team visit on October 1995. As self-study co-chairs, we drew on a variety of tools we had discovered through our TQM experience—group process tools, problem solving tools, planning tools, and decision-making tools to get started with the self-study. Organizing and preparing to conduct the self-study at Fox Valley Technical College consisted of five phases:

- Identifying the Steering Committee
- Orienting and In-servicing the Steering Committee
- Developing a Timeline
- Determining the Scope/Design of the Self-Study
- Selecting Subcommittee Members

To complete these phases took approximately nine months but, in the end, it was time well spent. Careful planning and organizing not only set the tone for the entire self-study but prevented having to "rework" the basic operating structure that drove the effort. We offer to others what we believe were our best practices and the quality tools we used in each phase.

Identifying the Steering Committee

Our first task was to put together a balanced slate of 14 people who could work together to manage the self-study process effectively. We conducted short interviews with each dean/administrator, vice president, and union president to receive their nominations for staff who were critical thinkers without an ax to grind, well-respected by peers, and effective participants in a group setting. From these nominations, we drew a Steering Committee balanced in terms of:

- Employee status (support, management, faculty)
- Location (main campus and regional sites)
- Instructional and non-instructional positions
- Administrative units within the College
- Instructional division (Business, Service Occupations, Technical, General Studies)
- Length of service
- Gender

A key quality tool we used was the L-shaped matrix that visually displayed the balance among the attributes listed above. Each Steering Committee nominee received a personal written invitation to serve from the College president.

Orienting and In-Servicing the Steering Committee

We felt it was very important to "frame" this project, establishing a clear process to be followed; clear roles, responsibilities, and reporting relationships; and clearly stated boundaries based on practices described in Scholtes' *Team Handbook.* At the Steering Committee's first meeting, the benefits of reaccreditation and the five NCA Criteria for Accreditation were presented and fully discussed. The co-chairs defined the roles and responsibilities the following key players would have in the self-study:

- Steering Committee
- Co-Chairs
- President
- Self-Study Subcommittees

Tools used in this phase were grounding and consensus building. The NCA Steering Committee facilitator, who skillfully led meetings of the group through their two-year commitment, utilized a large group process known as grounding. Each member of the Steering Committee explained why he or she had accepted this assignment and his/her expectations for the self-study process. In a consensus-building exercise that followed the discussion of roles and responsibilities, each member expressed his/her commitment to the boundaries implicit in the roles and responsibilities.

Developing a Timeline

It was essential to have an agreed-upon timeline for conducting the self-study. Working in small groups, the 19-member Steering Committee (ex officios included) created process flowcharts to illustrate key events in the self-study during the two years leading to the visit. This process helped each member clarify key events and understand when they would need to be done. The co-chairs congealed the work of the Steering Committee into one process flowchart, which functioned as an educational piece as well a management tool, for guiding the self-study. The major quality tool used in this phase was the process flowchart with the Plan-Do-Check-Act cycle identified, as shown in the "NCA Timeline" on the next page.

Determining the Scope/Design of the Self-Study

Deming always asked: "What is the aim? What is the purpose?" Although the primary purpose of the self-study was to gain continued accreditation by NCA, a major objective was also to encourage institutional improvement. Thus the self-study was undertaken as a total College effort, involving a large segment of staff. In preparation for conducting the study, the Steering Committee adopted the following goals:

- Provide the opportunity for leadership, unity, cooperation, and communication among various levels of staff in the common goal of College improvement and identification of effective implementation of change.
- Identify areas, systems, and processes that are strengths or assets of the College that can be actively maintained, nurtured, and built upon.
- Identify areas, systems, and processes that need strengthening to ensure a quality educational process and product.
- Identify critical issues and new activities that Fox Valley Technical College will face in the next three to five years. Define how the results of the self-study will be used in long-range planning and goal setting.
- Develop an awareness and understanding, both internally and externally, of the mission and purposes of the College and how its programs and services to students and business flow from the mission and purposes.

In addition, the Steering Committee considered possible self-study designs, which the co-chairs presented in a matrix that identified advantages and disadvantages of each design. The designs we considered involved using:

- cross-functional subcommittees
- existing College committees/teams
- a committee-free approach
- the "hybrid" approach
- the Malcolm Baldrige criteria

Ultimately, the cross-functional subcommittee approach was selected. The key quality tools used were brainstorming and the matrix.

Selecting Subcommittee Members

Using a consensus process, the Steering Committee selected members from a list of interested faculty, staff, and administration. Following the discussion of who would be asked to serve on each subcommittee, the degree of consensus was shown using a tool called "Fist to Five." In this procedure, each Steering Committee member held up five fingers to show complete support, a fist to show no support, or a 2-4 fingers to show a medium degree of support. This technique immediately displayed the level of agreement for the membership of a subcommittee, as well as for many other decisions made throughout the self-study.

Vice presidents served as ex officio members of each subcommittee involving their area. A process flowchart was used again to identify the step-by-step process for inviting and training subcommittee members. Overall, more than 120 of the College's 650 faculty and staff were involved in the self-study. In order to "begin with the end in mind," brainstorming and consensus were used to identify and articulate a clear charge to the subcommittees and recommend a method of study, making it clear to invited members just what their commitment would be.

In Retrospect

Fox Valley Technical College concluded its self-study and hosted a six-person team visit in October 1995. Among the evaluation team's findings was a statement that "...quality tools... have revolutionized governance since the 1985 visit." *(Report of a Visit to Fox Valley Technical College, p.* 6) In one of the last meetings of the Steering Committee, members commented that the planning of the self-study allowed diverse points of view to be reflected and subcommittees to have access to enough information, resources, tools, and support to do a creditable and honest job. As viewed by the evaluation team, the resulting self-study document was "candid and well-documented, indicating the institution's ability to view itself critically and share their views openly with an external audience." *(Report of a Visit to Fox Valley Technical College,* p. 1) We believe the use of quality tools significantly assisted the process and the product of the self-study.

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Scholtes, Peter R. *The Team Handbook: How to Use Teams to Improve Quality.* Madison, WI: Joiner Associates, 1988.

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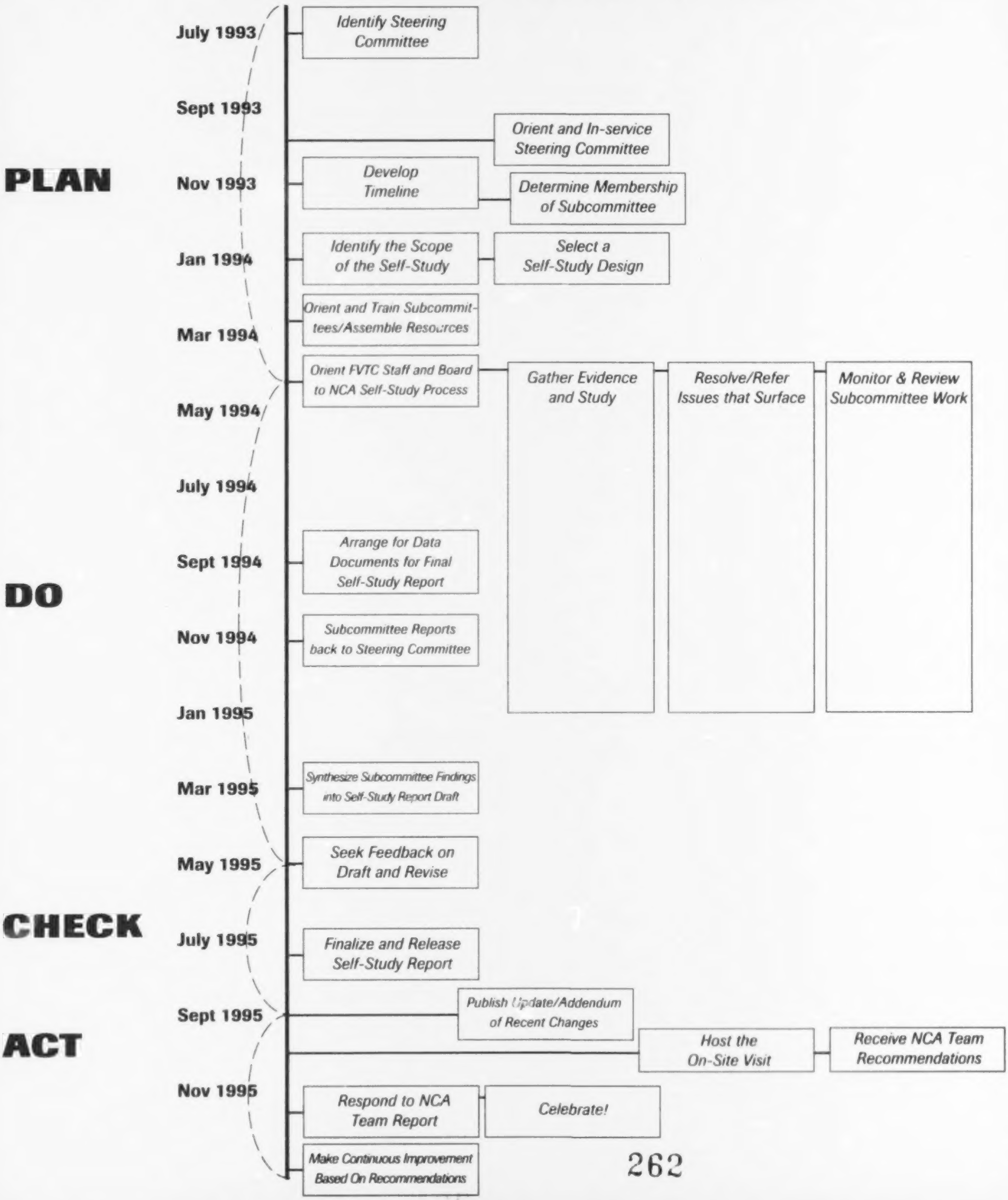
Appendix A

Fox Valley Technical College NCA Timeline


PLAN
DO
CHECK
ACT
July 1993
Sept 1993
Nov 1993
Jan 1994
Mar 1994
May 1994
July 1994
Sept 1994
Nov 1994
Jan 1995
Mar 1995
May 1995
July 1995
Sept 1995
Nov 1995
Identify Steering Committee
Orient and In-service Steering Committee
Develop Timeline
Determine Membership of Subcommittee
Identify the Scope of the Self-Study
Select a Self-Study Design
Orient and Train Subcommittees/Assemble Resources
Orient FVTC Staff and Board to NCA Self-Study Process
Gather Evidence and Study
Resolve/Refer Issues that Surface
Monitor & Review Subcommittee Work
Arrange for Data Documents for Final Self-Study Report
Subcommittee Reports back to Steering Committee
Synthesize Subcommittee Findings into Self-Study Report Draft
Seek Feedback on Draft and Revise
Finalize and Release Self-Study Report
Publish Update/Addendum of Recent Changes
Host the On-Site Visit
Receive NCA Team Recommendations
Respond to NCA Team Report
Celebrate!
Make Continuous Improvement Based On Recommendations

Bootlegging Institutional Change through Mandated Self-Study

Mark Bagshaw

Having survived a number of years of managed decline, and having put together several successful enrollment seasons as a result of "revisioning" ourselves, Marietta College in 1993 had been led by its president to a strategic vision of itself, but it had no continuing institution-wide planning processes, and seemed unable to commit to implementing its senior officers' strategies. Knowing that lack of success at the stage of implementation is a major cause of failure with most organizational plans in both the profit and not-for profit sectors gave us no comfort, and our situation clearly wanted change.

The workshop session that this paper supplements focuses on the ways by which the institutional self-study, mandated by our institutional accrediting association as part of accreditation review, allowed us to develop inclusive, institution-wide decision processes that captured first the attention, and then the imagination of institutional participants, and ultimately the will of the institution to move forward. With a slightly different focus, this paper explores three types of *organizational* (as distinguished from personal or interpersonal) impediments to effective institutional change that mandated self-study helped us to overcome.

On the basis of our reading of published research and from personal experience, most of us would acknowledge that human beings, individually and collectively, dislike change, and there is an abundance of literature (for example, in the field of organizational development) that not only documents patterns of personal and interpersonal resistance to change in organizations but offers strategies for dealing with it. Naturally enough, our tendency is to assume that once we have produced changes in organizational participants' attitudes toward particular planned changes, their behaviors will change, and successful implementation can begin. What often is not clear to us is that other artifacts of human organization, as well as the values that organizational participants attach to them, can impose serious, even debilitating obstacles to implementation.

At Marietta College, mandated self-study provided us with a convenient, temporary scaffolding that allowed us to work on needed permanent improvements to our institutional edifice by going around three specific types of organizational obstructions to needed change: existing institutional rules or policies, institutional structure, and institutional culture.

Rules

The formal policies and accepted understandings that govern the ways an institution does its business operate as an effective quasi-legal system that rewards with legitimacy those behaviors that are congruent with its directives, and brands as illegitimate actions (behaviors) that deviate. *Prima facie*, illegitimate, or deviant behaviors lack the authority to draw on institutional resources to accomplish their purposes, and lack the legitimate right to expect the support or compliance of institutional participants acting in accordance with their authorized roles. In what is a fairly common pattern among small colleges, at Marietta College, in the recent past, the authority to determine and review curriculum and to make substantive determinations about tenure and promotion lay with the faculty, but the prerogative to initiate discussion, and the authority to pursue substantive institutional changes lay with the administrative hierarchy (board of trustees, president, and president's cabinet of senior officers). Although any institutional participant might propose any change in any institutional policy or procedure, or suggest a review of current practice, such a proposal could acquire institutional legitimacy and could be entertained as an initiative only when approved by the administration at at least the cabinet level. For an idea to pass beyond discussion and approval to actual implementation, it would require, minimally, one champion at at least the cabinet level.

As an example of how a dysfunctional system of authority might impede change efforts, a perception developed at our college in the course of the first half of this decade that the president's cabinet was a tremendous energy sink: proposals and suggestions for improvements—some of them innovative and time-sensitive—were observed to go into the cabinet; but, like Foxie Loxie's den, few of the entrants were seen to come back out. This perception led to two kinds of behavior, neither of them useful in the long run: Some institutional participants went around the cabinet and took their ideas directly to the president or the board of trustees. (Of 29 members in fall 1994, 22 were alumni, and several others were prominent local citizens, and thus had pre-existing or extramural relationships with a number of continuing faculty and staff.) Other institutional participants, believing, consistent with efficacy theory, that their efforts would not lead to effective outcomes, ceased to propose and suggest, and turned to cultivating their gardens.

In this decision environment, mandated self-study gave us a tool for expanding existing choices. Self-study provided an extramural legal framework that had its own legitimacy, and its own external authority drawn from the consent of the constituent members of the accreditation body to which we belong. Sanctioned by this process, we were able to "bootleg" a more participant-inclusive process for shared diagnosis and analysis of our institutional condition, and to foster a consensus of support for making improvements and accomplishing a revitalized vision of our college (as described in some detail in the related workshop presentation). Without mandated self-study, these efforts were powerless to be born.

Structure

An institution's formal structure, like its system of policies and procedures, is a way of controlling behaviors in the interest of coordinating activity toward the accomplishment of institutional purposes. A hierarchical, bureaucratic, command-and-control governance system allows for the precise coordination, from a centralized command center, of a multiplicity of diverse, discrete functions, carried out in a consistent, standardized fashion. As we all have become increasingly and dramatically aware, since at least the energy crisis of the mid-seventies, this way of organizing organizations works best when task environments, competitive environments, and political environments are stable. On the other hand, when resources are uncertain and flexibility and sensitivity to environmental changes are required, or when broad ownership of institutional problems and opportunities is desired—or when the principal need of the institution is no longer (to borrow an antithesis that I believe belongs rightfully to Warren Bennis) "to do things in the right way but rather to discover what are the right things to do," and then *do* them with dispatch-centralized bureaucratic structures and top-down planning models impede effective institutional performance. Moreover, the assumption of their legitimacy, and the assumptions about human behaviors and human relationships that they imply, undervalue individual initiative, undermine morale, and underestimate the potential for creativity that is latent in such basic building blocks of contemporary institutional life as academic departments.

Let me offer a nontrivial example of a structural impediment that my college encountered. About two years ago, the college's board of trustees decided not to renew the chief academic officer's employment contract. They did this without prior consultation with the faculty through its formal governing structure, a faculty council of six elected members. The board's decision put the council in a difficult position because it was itself midway through the process of conducting a formal performance review of the chief academic officer. The council's review included a formal provision to make recommendations to the president of the college regarding renewal or non-renewal of the officer's contract. These circumstances quickly became known to the faculty as a whole. Initially, there was some concern about the legal grounds by which the board could, in effect, reach around the president to "not renew" an officer who, according to the board's bylaws, reported to and served at the pleasure of the president; however, the chief source of faculty concern was the lack of adequate consultation before, and hard information after the decision, and this concern led to an extraordinary meeting of the members of the faculty council with representatives of the board.

As an outcome of this meeting, the faculty council issued a memorandum to faculty that stated that the discussion at the meeting had "emphasized ways of restoring and maintaining the stability of Marietta College in the aftermath of action that left many in the College community with questions about its governance." The memo also described how trustees at the meeting had argued that while the non-renewal decision was indeed extraordinary, and while their action would not set a precedent for future actions, the board had acted out of concern "that aggrieved faculty members lacked appropriate means to express complaints about administrators."

This rationalization and the general outcomes represented in the memorandum, were viewed by many faculty as inadequate—a number of them believing that the council had been "handled" by the board, and that the council had been remiss in not pressing the view that faculty (as well as the president) had some formal ownership rights in the evaluation of the chief academic officer, and that these rights included consultation on any decision whether to renew that officer's contract. However, like it or not, this was the only formal explanation the faculty council and the faculty was to get; in a subsequent forum with faculty, members of the board stated that legal considerations prevented them from discussing the matter in greater detail. With efforts to communicate unsuccessful, these two governance structures-the board of trustees and the faculty council-had no formal way to accommodate each other, let alone to change themselves sufficiently to integrate their conceptual differences in a formal understanding representing either a division of responsibilities or a policy on adequate consultation.

Mandated self-study gave us a way as an institution to discuss and address important issues like the distribution of governance rights and responsibilities and the role of the board in the institution, in a way that could not be accommodated within the frame of reference of existing institutional structures. The structure of the self-study process-temporary, nonproprietary, and thus to a large degree nonthreatening-allowed us to entertain problems and solutions that other more traditional and more "invested" structures could not countenance or address.

At the beginning of self-study at Marietta, the process was a discrete, structural anomaly "laid on top" of the continuing business of the institution. However, once those steering the self-study process began to demonstrate their willingness to articulate and engage, in a realistic way, the important questions facing the institution-that is, once we demonstrated that the central question of self-study was not "What do we have to do to stay accredited?" but "What do we want to do to assure our continuing vitality?" Self-study *became* the continuing business of the institution. The president of the college directed two presidentially appointed committees—finance and facilities—to serve as study groups in the self-study process, and the faculty council allocated the decision time of a number of its committees to addressing central questions identified in the self-study process. Indeed, it was in the faculty council-appointed instruction and curriculum committee, serving as a self-study study group, that most of the critical and innovative work of creating an integrated model of academic planning, program review, and educational outcomes assessment was accomplished during 1994-95. Even the most bottom-line-oriented administrative units contributed a staffer or two to serve on one or another of our study groups. A critical lesson we learned through this process was that self-study could help us to refurbish or rehabilitate diffuse, dilatory, and dysfunctional elements of our organizational infrastructure.

In American football, there used to be a diversionary or misdirection play (perhaps there still exists) in which the quarterback, to all appearances, has divested the ball to a running back who draws the attention of the opposing team as he charges the line of scrimmage, but in fact the quarterback has secreted the ball on the less conspicuous of his hips, while moving roughly parallel to the line and acquiring interference and retaining the option to pass or run as the play develops. This was called a "bootleg play," and it captures well the kind of opportunistic, nonconfrontational (not to say temporizing or deceptive) approach we took to charting a course, developing momentum and accumulating support for major change, and overcoming entropy in the form of entrenched structural impediments.

Culture

It is when we seriously attempt to enact change in our institution that we begin to recognize just how much we are, like the denizens of the Hotel California, "prisoners of our own device." On reflection, however, this should not be so surprising. As the eminent sociologist Philip O. Selznick suggested some years ago in his work *Leadership in Administration* (1957), a major distinction between an institution and a conventional organization is that we invest institutions with cultural meaning: Institutions are "infused with value," Selznick says, "beyond the requirements of the task at hand." Thus institutions of higher education are not simply part of the functioning social machinery—acculturating, credentialing, rationing opportunity, and so on—but are themselves cultural artifacts to which we are attached intellectually and emotionally.

Short of financial exigency, it is hard to imagine the set of circumstances that would lead a college or university to violate its history, traditions, and cultural norms in order to create radical and lasting change. At our institution (and we probably are a lot like many of you), the underlying cultural assumption has been that desirable change comes about by articulating a desirable vision, which is to say one that not only gives promise of desirable outcomes but whose outcomes and whose plans for getting to these outcomes are consistent with institutional values. Further, the Marietta College culture has said that a truly desirable vision for change can only be articulated by the president of the institution. The rest of us can buy in, but it only becomes a bona fide institutional vision if it descends *ex cathedra*. Of course, it also has been part of our institutional culture (and we probably are a lot like many of you in this, too) that as the vision fails to be implemented or proves defective, we back away (perhaps also whistling softly in feigned insouciance), while the college continues to muddle through, allowing the responsibility for "dealing with" pressing institutional matters to fall to one or another of the highly placed but often short-tenure administrators who, with a flutter of consultation, will diagnose and prescribe for us yet again, and yet again save us from ourselves—at least until the next encompassing vision catches our eye.

After observing this pattern at close hand for several years, some of my institutional colleagues began to suspect that the laying on of presidential vision—no matter how culturally and teleologically desirable, and no matter how excellent the leadership of the president envisioning it—was sufficient neither to our motivational nor our existential need. In this context, the self-study process that we enacted provided a virtual counterculture where such ideas could be entertained, and where alternative models that placed differing values on different things could be explored and tested without prejudice and without appearing to compromise established values and the received order of things—with virtual impunity. Self-study provided a useful vehicle for re-thinking and re-creating (the image of adults absorbed in serious play is appropriate here) our institutional values, purposes, processes, and structures.

In this regard, one idea that came out of self-study and that changed the way we think about ourselves and conduct our affairs is the idea that leadership (which is, after all, a group behavior) consists principally of being able to define and enact a reality that can gain a consensual following. This idea is similar to one expressed in Max De Pree's *Leadership Is an Art*, published in 1989, but it originates, I believe, in a scholarly article written by Linda Smircich and Gareth Morgan that appeared in 1982 in the *Journal of Applied Behavioral Studies* (1 8:257f.). Another idea that we would not have come to, left to our ordinary devices, was that leadership usefully might be distributed throughout an institution, and-at the expense of some modest loss of responsiveness, coordination, and control-might involve institutional participants in all parts of the organization exercising leadership in ways that serve the institution's purposes better than what typically occurs in a centralized, top-down model of institutional leadership.

It was probably the combination of these two recognitions that led us to set in motion the consensually derived, resource-conditioned, educational-values-driven, and department-grounded process of strategic management, program review, and evaluation described in the related workshop presentation. To be able, temporarily, to stand apart from our cultural norms and look critically at our behaviors, to try on alternative models, and to develop ways to integrate new ideas with our existing practices had extremely useful outcomes for Marietta College.

Did the fact that self-study was required for accreditation compel us to do what we did? No. Mandated self-study gave us the opportunity to look at ourselves, but it was our choice to avail that opportunity or not. We did what we did as an institution because we were able to convince a sufficient number of key stakeholders at the college that sitting still was more untenable, more risky, than facing the uncertainty of moving forward. Have we been gloriously successful in all of our undertakings? Not at all. Department-based planning carried out in the context of a highly interactive resource allocation and budgeting process is producing good outcomes, and the model for academic program review has been embraced; we are even developing appropriate processes for resolving the higher volume of conflict that accompanies greater campus community involvement in institutional decision making-and this extensive involvement has been a major source of success in realizing our change efforts, as has proved true of similar efforts in many organizational contexts. On the other hand, our attempts at educational outcomes assessment over the period leading up to the reaccreditation visit were more than somewhat unsuccessful. (On a more hopeful note, information and diagnostic assessment processes developed during self-study have put us in a position to know and articulate *why* we underperformed so badly in this area, and to remedy the situation in our more recent efforts.)

For Marietta College, NCA-mandated self-study provided a needed external impetus, authority, and justification to step outside the existing institutional repertoire of methods for allocating decisions and "doing business," and afforded a sheltering temporary structure, venue, and vehicle for collegial interaction on important institutional issues that was unavailable otherwise at the institution at that time. As the immediate impact of campus visitation on institutional behavior gradually fades from institutional memory, we retain a satisfying net gain in the form of improved governance and improved, "self-correcting" collegial planning, implementation, and assessment processes that self-study allowed us to plant and cultivate as part of our institutional culture.

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Facilitating Communication in the Self-Study Process

Carol Brobst

The self-study process at Hawkeye Community College was initiated more than two years prior to the comprehensive evaluation visit in March of 1995. In planning the process, two elements were initially identified for the college to be successful in its self-study; specifically, staff involvement and open communication. Reflecting on the success of the self-study and the related evaluation visit at Hawkeye, it is apparent that continuous focus on these two important aspects greatly enhanced the college's achievement in its reaccreditation efforts.

At the same time Hawkeye Community College was involved in the self-study process for the North Central Association evaluation, it was developing and implementing a three-year strategic plan to transition from a technical institution to a comprehensive community college. Because of the impact of this major institutional change, staff were highly interested in identifying potential environmental changes that were needed to effectively implement the revised institutional mission. Therefore, faculty and staff were also eager to become involved in the self-study process. Appointment of the Self-Study Coordinator, the Steering Committee, and five Criterion Committees resulted in broad representation of faculty, students, administrators, and classified staff.

Staff Participation

From the onset, the college President communicated strong commitment and support for the self-study process. Verbally, at a college-wide in-service program as the self-study began, the President and Self-Study Coordinator emphasized the importance of having extensive participation of college staff throughout the process. They also expressed their interest in having the process conducted in an environment of openness. It was stressed that such a process would yield the most meaningful results for institutional growth and improvement as well as present an accurate evaluation of the institution. At the same in-service meeting, the first opportunity for involvement of college staff in the self-study process was given. An Institutional Assessment Survey was administered to staff in the fall of 1992 to evaluate college services and operations in view of the college's new comprehensive community college mission. The survey was administered again in the fall of 1994 for comparative data. Results of the survey were communicated throughout the college and included in the Self-Study Report.

Related to the college's strategic planning, Face Validity Exercises (focus groups) were conducted to identify and prioritize institutional strengths and challenges. These groups were facilitated by the Strategic Planning Committee with participation of 160 staff. Information obtained from the groups was used with the Institutional Assessment Survey in the self-study.

Structured Questions

From the fall of 1992 through the spring of 1995, self-study was a "household word" throughout the college. If faculty and staff were not involved in various self-study committees, they were reading or hearing about activities that were occurring. The Steering Committee developed approximately 200 questions that needed to be answered to provide criterion committees with information about their areas of study. Examples of topics included: faculty governance, evidence of support for the college's mission, division and department goals, evidence of freedom of inquiry by faculty and students, effectiveness of the budgeting process, student clubs and organizations, facility description, and employee demographics. These questions were distributed for response to administrators and departments within the four major divisions of the college. In addition, the President's Cabinet, composed of division vice presidents, addressed and responded to questions as a group. Information obtained through this process was used in development of Criterion Committee reports. Specific data obtained were often shared with all staff through the college's weekly newsletter keeping the self-study process in the forefront.

Throughout the process, frequent meetings (formal and informal) were held between the President and Self-Study Coordinator to discuss self-study issues and to plan opportunities for continued involvement of college staff in the process. Progress in meeting the established timeline for preparation of the Self-Study Report was also reviewed periodically.

The College's Board of Trustees was informed of the plan for conducting the institutional self-study and the timeline for completion of the study. Periodically, Trustees participated in some of the same activities college staff were involved in; i.e. the Institutional Assessment Survey and Face Validity Exercises. At regular intervals, updates on the self-study were presented to the Board of Trustees.

Communication Activities

During the self-study a number of activities were used to communicate with faculty and staff about the self-study process, including:

- Formal presentations at college in-service programs
- Formal presentations at faculty in-service programs
- Publication of Steering Committee and Criterion Committee meetings
- Formal presentations to Board of Trustees
- Discussions at divisional staff meetings
- Distribution of survey analyses to faculty and staff:
    - Institutional Assessment Survey
    - High School Student Interest Survey
    - Entering Student Survey
    - Student Opinion Survey
    - Withdrawing/Non-returning Student Survey
    - Alumni Follow-up
    - Community Interest Surveys
- Periodic updates presented in *Hawkeye Happenings* (weekly college newsletter)

Self-Study Report Review

Preparation of the Self-Study Report was the responsibility of the Self-Study Coordinator assisted by the Steering Committee. The final report included formal reports from the five Criterion Committees. As criterion reports were developed by the respective Committee Co-chairs, each committee member reviewed and endorsed the report. This process validated the individual Criterion Committee reports as they were submitted to the Steering Committee. Each criterion report was presented to and formally accepted by the Steering Committee prior to inclusion in the Self-Study Report. As these reports were shared with the Steering Committee, staff were invited to attend the Committee's meetings and hear the findings of the Criterion Committees.

In November of 1994, 100 copies of the Self-Study Report draft were distributed throughout the college. All staff were informed via a college-wide in-service meeting and the Hawkeye Happenings that additional draft copies were available for review. Staff were encouraged to participate in the review process. Two weeks after distribution of the draft, meetings were set up at various times and locations throughout the college for staff to meet with the Steering Committee to discuss the draft report and to bring issues forward from the report. Once again, this action reinforced openness of the process and institutional support of the report prior to final publication.

In January of 1995, multiple copies of the final Self-Study Report were distributed to the college community, and activities changed to focus on the upcoming evaluation visit. A formal meeting was held with all college staff and faculty followed by individual meetings with Student Government, the college's Board of Trustees, the President's Cabinet, and the Administrative Council. At each of these meetings, the Self-Study Coordinator reviewed the proposed schedule for the comprehensive evaluation visit, noted the role various individuals and groups would have with the evaluation team, and emphasized open times during the site visit agenda for staff and students to meet with the visitation team. Staff were also provided with information about the evaluation team members and the institutions from which they came. These meetings reinforced the readiness of the college for the visit and helped Trustees, faculty, staff, and students understand the importance of participating in the upcoming visit.

Conclusion

Throughout the process, the College President, the Steering Committee, the Self-Study Coordinator, faculty and administrative staff were all involved in keeping the self-study an institutional priority. At the conclusion of the evaluation visit (three hours after the evaluation team had left the campus) a college-wide celebration was held for students and staff to share in culmination of a successful self-study and visit. Once again, the activity emphasized the importance of open communication and extensive staff and student involvement throughout the process. More than 1000 individuals participated in this event acknowledging the college's major accomplishment.

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Devising a Quality Steering Committee and Schedule

Ann McPherren
Gerald Smith

As senior administrators begin to woo unsuspecting faculty or staff to become Self-Study Coordinators, they may focus on the fame and fortune sure to come at the end of the process. A successful team visit by NCA consultant-evaluators, a self-study document that leads the institution into the future, and the promise of release time to energize the coordinator are commonly offered inducements. Once a Self-Study Coordinator has been hooked, it becomes apparent that there are a few things to do before the accolades begin. Process planning and scheduling aided the efforts of one novice coordinator at Huntington College in Indiana.

Selection of the Self-Study Steering Committee

The Self-Study Coordinator should recognize that the responsibility for the process is largely his/her own. While the institutional accreditation decision rests on the attributes of the entire college or university, the Self-Study Coordinator must find a way to manage the self-study process. Other faculty and staff will be interested in the process, but the crush of their assigned responsibilities likely will make them spectators in the initial stages of the process. It is therefore important to create a solid self-study steering committee to aid the efforts of the Self-Study Coordinator.

Self-Study Coordinator involvement in the selection process is helpful. Persons named to the self-study steering committee should be knowledgeable about the institution, committed to committee work, and influential in institutional decision-making. Rather than loading the steering committee with many members, which makes group meetings difficult to manage in length and participation, a six-eight member group will work well in many situations.

Because of the small size of the group, care should be taken in the selection of members to provide broad institutional perspective. People with a generally positive view of the institution provide more help than do outspoken or one-issue critics. The self-study process will allow for plenty of self-examination and criticism without saddling the coordinator with an uncooperative work group. Those with commitment to and experience in student learning outcomes assessment are valuable members. In order to elevate the presence of the self-study process and to help push people to comply with requests for information along the way, the self-study committee may be co-chaired by the Self-Study Coordinator and the college president or chief academic officer.

The steering committee should have representation from influential faculty and administrative bodies such as: president's/administrative council, academic policies committee, assessment committee, and long-range planning group. Careful overlapping selection may allow representation from a variety of academic disciplines as well. The integration of these groups with the self-study process is crucial to institutional data gathering, evaluation, and change. The comprehensive institutional perspectives offered by this group allow self-study objectives to have an impact on the ongoing work of the college. While the steering committee will review NCA criteria with the goal of reaccreditation, it should commit itself to using the self-study process as a vehicle for institutional improvement.

The self-study process at Huntington College was designed to achieve the following objectives:

- to gather information about institutional resources and programs;
- to ensure that programs are supportive of institutional mission and philosophy of education;

- to foster a climate for institutional self-assessment;
- to ensure that strategic plans are in place and being implemented;
- to ensure that assessment plans are in place and being implemented;
- to highlight needs for institutional action so that more effective service can be delivered to students and other constituents;
- to develop a self-study document that presents Huntington College in a comprehensive and accurate manner.

Scheduling the Self-Study Process

One of the first tasks of the Self-Study Coordinator is the development of a realistic schedule for the process. The schedule should be designed with room for flexibility yet at the same time be a document that is taken seriously. A workable schedule is presented below. The self-study steering committee should be expected to meet and work in earnest over one to one and a half years beginning about two years before the visit. As a general guideline, the greater the level of involvement by campus personnel in actual self-study preparation, the longer the timeline for completion of the study. A benefit of the smaller 6-10 member steering committee is the relative ease of arranging meetings, gaining participation, and receiving feedback on both the process and the document.

Another suggestion for an accelerated self-study schedule is to use the Self-Study Coordinator as writer and editor of the study. One of the drawbacks of this rather centralized process is the possible lack of process awareness by other campus constituents. If such a centralized process is chosen, the crossover membership between the steering committee and other campus bodies is essential. The use of the Self-Study Coordinator as writer and editor of the document has benefits in schedule compliance and in the production of a cohesive document. As mentioned earlier, the Self-Study Coordinator has the greatest responsibility for and interest in the process. The coordinator must have or develop a vision of the entire institution and integrate that vision with the NCA requirements. The Self-Study Coordinator and other writers will find themselves performing many re-writing and editing tasks with the already existing institutional documents and responses to requests for information. Why have several writers re-write and edit only to end up with a repetitive/lacking, stylistically awkward study? The steering committee should assist in editing content areas for misstatements and an English professor or another wordsmith should be enlisted to proofread.

Institutional Orientation

Several other aspects of the process deserve mention. Steering committee members and other faculty should be fully oriented to the self-study process and the NCA Criteria for Accreditation early in the process. Many institutions will have not undergone an NCA review for 10 years. While old-timers may be relatively attune to the process, many in the community are not. Even old-timers need an update on the areas of focus for the visit. Orientation should not be restricted to steering committee members. An important aspect to the successful project is the cooperation of the campus community in gathering data and preparing the campus for review. A meeting of the faculty senate, faculty departmental meetings, and distribution of NCA criteria with requests for program information provide opportunities to heighten faculty awareness, input, and assistance.

A step by step in-depth discussion of NCA criteria by the steering committee provides an organizational framework by which to conduct the institutional assessment. During the discussion of each criterion, steering committee members will generate a list of pertinent institutional documents, programs, processes, and contact people. While much of the self-study document focuses on current activities and plans for the future, the steering committee must review past failures and successes as a part of the process. In particular, concerns cited in the most recent NCA Team Report should be reviewed in light of current NCA criteria. Obviously, the recommendations and concerns from a prior visit should not be news to campus leaders and action/programs/policies should already be in place. Ongoing issues such as budget needs, enrollment/retention issues, or student learning outcomes assessment may continue to be focal points for review. The steering committee should be well versed in these issues.

Self-Study Timetable

Activity	**Months prior to Visit**
○ Appointment of Self-Study Coordinator ○ Initial review of NCA self-study documents	27
○ Appointment of the Self-Study Steering Committee	24
○ Orientation of Self-Study Steering Committee to NCA Criteria ○ Review of preliminary self-study timetable	23
○ Self-study plan submitted to North Central	20
○ Review of NCA documents, previous self-study, and NCA Report of a Visit by Steering Committee ○ Participation by Self-Study Steering Committee members in relevant off campus conferences (NCA, AAHE , Assessment)	18-22
○ Completion of self-study team objectives ○ Appointment of task forces to tackle specific areas of concern ○ Charge to academic departments to supply needed information regarding programs and assessment outcomes ○ Steering Committee identification of institutional documents satisfying NCA Criteria, i.e. mission statement, philosophy of education, institutional objectives and goals, human, financial and physical resources necessary to accomplish the institution's purpose, assessment programs, long-range planning, integrity	16-18
○ Major program changes and distinctives due to NCA Self-Study Coordinator	12
○ Self-Study Coordinator review of institutional Annual Reports	10-12
○ Self-Study Coordinator meetings with administrative departments directed particularly at Criteria fulfillment ○ Self-Study Coordinator prepares initial draft of self-study ○ Self-Study Steering Committee review of self-study drafts	4-10
○ Final Self-Study Report to NCA	2

One of the sometimes overlooked opportunities presented by the NCA review is the chance for faculty and staff to take advantage of professional development workshops and conferences. The prospect of a broad institutional review often encourages faculty and administrators to feel the need to bone up on one or another area. Self-Study Coordinators and steering committee members may be the principal beneficiaries of an increased administrative openness to funding attendance at conferences on assessing student achievement, collaboration, faculty development and evaluation, long range planning, etc. Self-Study Coordinators should foster this spirit of development and push for budget funds for these activities.

No substitute for planning and organization exists. Not only does the implementation of these functions help foster a successful self-study, the Self-Study Coordinator's stress level drops to a more manageable level. Coordinators should also be assured that there is no need to reinvent the wheel. Much expertise and relevant research already are in existence in the institution. A plan for data gathering and a presentation strategy makes the overwhelming seem almost possible.

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Making the Most of the Team Visit

Carroll L. Bennett
Nancy DeSombre
Curt Vandivier

The logistics of an NCA team visit often receive less attention than the self-study process yet may have a profound impact on the outcome of the team's deliberations. This session will describe the steps that Des Moines Area Community College took to prepare for a comprehensive evaluation by a twelve-member team. The timetable begins approximately one year before the visit and continues until the institution receives formal notification of the Commission's final action.

One key to a successful visit is to develop a strong working relationship between the Self-Study Coordinator, the Team Chair, and your NCA staff liaison. The visit should be viewed as an opportunity to present your institution to a team of knowledgeable peers who will provide you with valuable advice.

The *NCA Handbook of Accreditation* contains an excellent checklist that is helpful in preparing for the visit. This session builds on this list by (1) providing useful tips on how to organize the visit, (2) presenting examples of letters and documents, and (3) including the perspective of a team chair on organizing the visit.

General Guidelines

- Develop a timetable for the self-study and meet all time objectives. Allow at least two months prior to the visit for review and input on the self-study from your NCA staff liaison.
- Develop a separate "logistics" schedule with all activities and responsibilities clearly outlined. Meet personally with all staff members who have responsibilities for events to be sure they fully understand expectations and deadlines.
- Clearly identify who has ultimate responsibility and approval for each phase of the operation. Ideally, the president will delegate authority for logistics to the Self-Study Coordinator. The Team Chair will work with this one person to organize all aspects of the visit. It is also helpful for the President to publicly announce the need for all staff to cooperate fully with the Coordinator.
- Designate one person to provide secretarial support on the logistics function. All information and activity should be funneled through this office. This person will logically provide similar support when the team comes to the campus.

Team Composition Review

The NCA office will send the president a proposed team list with biographical information on each member. You may assume all team members are competent and well-qualified. It is important to review the proposed team members with the self-study steering committee to assess the appropriateness of their backgrounds. You may conclude the team members lack depth in areas that are important to your institution. Your president will be asked by NCA to respond to the team composition and the president should request that a team member with specific characteristics be added. (It is never appropriate to suggest which team member should be deleted.)

Here are some typical concern areas:

- The ratio of faculty members is low when compared to administrators.
- A major focus in your institution is not reflected on the team (health occupations education, vocational education).
- You are anticipating consulting assistance from the team in an area in which the team appears to lack background and experience.
- Your institution has a ethnic or racial population that is not represented on the team.

It is inappropriate for anyone from the institution to make contact with the team chair or any team members until the NCA staff liaison confirms the team is complete and contact can be made.

Protocol

- The two key people in a team visit are the Team Chair and the college president. Each may delegate certain tasks and functions to others, but each will always have the final say on key decisions.
- All team communication prior to the team's arrival should be with the team chair, or with his/her approval.
- All meetings should include a college representative to welcome and introduce the team and to provide any needed technical assistance.
- College administrators (and their associates) should respect the need for the team to visit in private with individuals and groups. For example, the president's secretary should not attend an "open" meeting of administrative support staff since his/her presence might inhibit discussion. Often the team will prefer to meet with the members of the board of trustees, without the President in attendance. In all cases, the administrator should ask the team chair how to structure the meeting and who should attend.
- The college president should chair all meetings he/she attends (usually the opening meeting and the exit meeting). The president also has the right to determine who from the institution should attend these two meetings.
- The team report (preliminary and final) are sent to the college president. He/she determines its distribution within the institution.
- The president should assume the major role for making sure the team feels welcome at the institution.
- All college staff should be present during the visit and should make the needs of the team their primary concern during this time.
- A follow up report (in a thank you letter or other correspondence) should be sent to all guests who attended meetings with the team.
- The team chair should be alerted to recognize the efforts of key individuals within the institution at appropriate times (often during the exit interview).

Hospitality

The general rule is to do everything possible to make the team feel welcome and comfortable without being patronizing. The team chair should be consulted about any hospitality plans to be sure he/she is comfortable with the activities.

- Personally meet and welcome all team members when they arrive in your community. Use the trip from the airport as a time to provide information about the college and community.

- Select a hotel that is pleasant, but not luxurious. Ideally, the hotel should either have a good restaurant or be close to one. Be sure the hotel will provide meeting facilities, which include a large table and comfortable chairs. (In some cases a suite for the team chair will meet this need.) Inform the team about the hotel (enclose a colorful brochure if possible), including the address and phone numbers.
- Provide courtesies to team members in their hotel room when they arrive. These should be modest in cost. Some possibilities are a fruit basket, a "local products" package, or candy and sweets.
- Have coffee and appropriate refreshments in the team room and at each team function. (Be sure the coffee is refreshed and replaced throughout the day).
- Prepare a list of team members with brief (one paragraph) biographies for distribution to members of groups who meet with the team.
- Provide a support person (self-study secretary) who will be available to assist the team members with their needs through the visit.
- Provide the team with a college phone book, campus and building layout.
- Contact each team member to determine individual computer needs. Arrange for the computers in the team room.
- Designated reserved parking spaces for the NCA team members.
- If the college has an external sign board or internal electronic message boards, a note of welcome to the NCA team should be posted.

Team Room

A team room or rooms should be established to support these functions: a work room for the team; a site for information and documentation to support the self-study, and a place for private or small group meetings. The room should have a central location on the campus. The team room should be treated as a "private" room that allows the team's privacy to be respected at all times.

These steps should be taken to assemble materials for the room.

- Develop a list of items that need to be assembled.
  - Get input from the steering committee, self-study committees, and other key individuals in the organization.
  - Carefully review the institutional Self-Study Report and the Commission's General Institutional Requirements to identify items. (The report may say, "This information will be included in the team room.")
  - Ask the team chair for suggestions for additional items for the room.
- Arrange all support documents in a logical sequence in several major groupings. Use highly visible table cards that specify the name of the item. Prepare a printed index in outline form that makes it easy for the team to find items.
- Reassemble and reorganize the materials in the room at the end of the day.

Transportation

- Develop a detailed travel itinerary for each team member that includes name, arrival and departure dates and times, flight numbers, and needs for local transportation.
- Provide college cars for local transportation (if available).

- Supply a driver for team members during the visit. If possible it should be a person who can discuss the college and respond to questions. (This is especially important if the team travels to multiple locations.)
- Take the team members to the airport at the conclusion of the team visit.

Special Events

The typical team visit includes several scheduled meeting with special groups, both internal and external to the institution. It is important to prepare to structure these meetings to ensure that the team has access to the people who will provide them with required information. Here are some general guidelines.

- Receive approval from the team chair concerning any group meetings as well as when each will be scheduled.
- Thoughtfully select the individuals to be invited to provide a cross-section of opinion and experience.
- Notify the members of all groups, usually in writing, about the purpose, time, and format for the meeting.
    - Include a team biography sheet.
    - Provide attractive and readable name badges.
    - Have a college representative(s) at meetings to greet participants and introduce them to team members.
- If the meeting includes a meal, be sure seating assignments have been made to place team members in proximity with people who will have information that is of interest to them. Keep meal functions (except formal dinners) simple and short to allow maximum time for discussion.
- Keep events on schedule—assist the team chair (or key member) by reminding them of the ending time.

Publications/Logos

All printed materials and displays that relate to the visit should have a unified theme and layout. This should usually include the institution's name or initials, "NCA team visit," the date. A logo that incorporates the institution's name and NCA should be used. Here are some applications:

- Cover of Self-Study Report and appendix
- All brochures related to the visit
- Executive summary
- Name badges (team members and all who may meet team members including staff, guests and students in meeting groups)
- "Welcome" banners and posters

Unusual Items

- The team members will often arrive on Saturday (for a visit that begins on Monday morning). An offer to provide them with information on interesting features of the community, and to accompany them, is appreciated. However, you should not force a team member to accept, since many will use the time to prepare for the visit.
- A pre-visit by the team chair is seldom required except in unusual circumstances. The NCA staff liaison must make arrangements with the team chair and approve the pre-visit.

Communications

- A series of internal press releases should be published in the appropriate college newsletter to keep college personnel informed of the progress on the self-study, from the beginning through the final action by the Commission.
- The board of trustees should be briefed periodically about the process and their role in the self-study.
- State boards or other agencies that have responsibility for the institution should receive appropriate information.
- Copies of the completed Self-Study Report and appendix should be available to all staff members upon request and should be placed in all key offices and libraries.
- Appropriate press releases should be distributed at the conclusion of the visit and when official, final action is completed by the Commission.

Summary

A successful NCA accreditation team visit is based on effective and thoughtful logistics planning coupled with precise execution of the plan. A strong and cooperative working relationship between the team chair and the institution is a key component of a satisfying visit.

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Putting Technology to Work for You

Donald J. Lind

The Traditional Role of the PC

With the availability of sophisticated PC software the Self-Study Report should be a great looking document. In the hands of a skilled person a powerful word processor or desktop publishing package can do wonders for an otherwise drab looking report. However, the fact is that regardless of how impressive the document appears, the institution's accreditation status depends upon the organization, completeness, and veracity of its contents. Until recently the PC has been of little assistance in this aspect of the self-study process.

When one studies the nature of information, three characteristics inevitably surface. Information must be accurate, complete, and timely. Accuracy in the self-study process relates to fidelity with which the self-study document reflects the institution's operational mode. Completeness depends on the extent to which the study addresses all the North Central criteria and General Institutional Requirements (GIRs). Timeliness refers to two aspects of these activities-first, making sure that the reported activities correlate to when they actually happened, and second, getting the various reports and materials to North Central on time.

Special Needs of the Self-Study Coordinator

The Self-Study Coordinator and the various chairpersons of major committees must handle massive amounts of information. Inherent to this process are tasks of gathering the information, organizing , editing, and reporting it. These people have to be both diplomats and task masters at the same time. Included among the special needs of the Self-Study Coordinator are the following:

- The ability to bring assigned tasks into sharp focus.
- The ability to bring organization to a task.
- The ability to communicate well.
- The ability to read and follow instructions.
- The ability to utilize information technology.

The Ability to Bring Assigned Tasks Into Sharp Focus

The most important ability of a Self-Study Coordinator is to provide strong and effective leadership to his/her peers. Translated into action, this may be thought of as the ability to bring assigned tasks into sharp focus. Committee members should never be put into a position where they are not sure what it is they are to do. This can be best accomplished in two ways. First, specific assignments should address a limited number of items. Second, identification of major NCA criteria or GIRs should be clearly associated with each assignment.

- **Technological Implications.** The Self-Study document must address three sets of topics: the five Criteria for Accreditation, the twenty-four GIRs, and all major functional units of the institution. The implied permutations can be mind staggering. Cross-indexing between these factors can be a life-saver! Such cross-indexing can be accomplished by a spreadsheet such as Lotus, Quattro, or Excel. When topics are assigned to committees, these should be clearly monitored in an effort to assure that all major areas are being covered.

The Ability to Bring Organization to a Task

It is vital that a clear picture of the overall self-study process is always at hand. An effective Coordinator will make sure that committee chairpersons and members always have a sense of where they are and where they need to be.

- **Technological Implications.** The NCA Self-Study Coordinator must be in a position to provide ongoing updates as to the extent of completeness and direction of the self-study process. This can be accomplished by templates stored in a word processor. These templates may take the form of memos to committees with check-off lists of what has been done and what is still pending.

The Ability to Communicate Well

Obviously the Self-Study Report must be imminently readable. Spelling, punctuation, and grammar must be checked and rechecked. The impact of reporting a institutional job well done can be lessened by a report marred by distracting errors and/or sloppy writing.

- **Technological Implications.** Current state of the art software can provide an abundance of assistance in checking spelling and grammar. Most popular word processors such as Word for Windows, WordPerfect, and AmiPro when put through their paces can prove to be a great deal of help. Another feature to consider is the thesaurus found in the better word processors. Properly used a thesaurus will suggest alternative words for favored ones used repeatedly. One caveat is in order—in the final analysis, the document must be proof-read by a skilled reader.

The Ability to Read and Follow Instructions

North Central provides a copious supply of detailed information as to what is required, why it is required, and how it is to be reported. There is no reason for a Self-Study Coordinator to produce a document that falls short in addressing all major requirements sought by NCA.

- **Technological Implications.** Because the volume of detailed information is so abundant the problem that often arises is that of keeping track of all of it. Notes referring back to page references within NCA booklets and materials can be a great help. The Notepad feature of Windows should not be overlooked in considering various options. The database feature of many spreadsheets is another tool one may want to utilize. A listing of what is required and where the various citations may be found can make the difference between possible confusion and true lucidity of action.

The Ability to Utilize Information Technology

The Self-Study Coordinator should never allow himself/herself to be taken hostage. This can come about when a Coordinator decides to utilize technology and/or software little known to him/her. If the Coordinator has to turn over everything to another person and wait for that person to respond, a hostage situation may in fact come about. This is not to say that the Coordinator has to be well-versed in the software used, but rather that the Coordinator knows what can be done using certain technology and that there is a least one other person that can assist in the event of a work stoppage.

- **Technological Implications.** The software used in the production of the report as well as the exchange of information should be selected by the Self-Study Coordinator. If the institution has a campus-wide computer network, serious consideration should be given to its use in reporting findings within committees and from committees to the Coordinator. The major consideration in both of these options is that of uniformity of reporting. The ability to merge one report directly into another can make the jobs of everyone much simpler.

If the Coordinator lacks a comprehensive set of software skills, the assistance of someone with such skills—word processing, spreadsheeting, and some database—can be a great help. A thorough familiarization with an integrated package such as Microsoft Office is a definite asset. Regardless of what the final selection is, make sure that the ability to create tables of contents and report indices are at your finger tips.

Another important feature of the final Self-Study Report is the use of graphs, charts, and pictures. Most leading word processors now include the ability to handle these needs. Desktop publishing packages should also be considered. Software such as PageMaker 5.0, Quark XPress 3.3 for Windows, Micrografx Designer, and CorelDraw provide the user with numerous means of combining text with graphics. Graphs should be large enough to be easily read as well as all data and notations associated with them. A good rule of thumb is to have no graph less than a half a page in size. Of extreme importance is the practice of insisting that all graphs be generated from the same software base, otherwise graphs that are similar in nature may take on varying appearances and become distracting to the reader.

Last but not least is some knowledge of and access to the Internet. Tremendous advantages can be realized by sharing information among colleges. Identifying colleagues in similar institutions is a good first step. Networking with those in the accreditation process and especially those who have just completed it may just be the advantage needed to get the self-study process off to a great start.

Conclusion

The Self-Study Coordinator should take advantage of as much technology he/she has access to and feels comfortable with. The term "overwhelming" is often heard as people describe their first encounter with the self-study process. Information gathering and progress in committee activities can be organized and monitored by the PC. Utilization of an integrated software package such as Microsoft office is one possible solution to this challenge.

More specificity and sophistication in task management can readily be obtained if the Self-Study Coordinator has access to the services of someone adept in basic programming skills and data management. By carefully laying out the requirements of the overall process, a person using software such as dBase V, Access, or Paradox can assemble a working system with relative ease. Such efforts up front can pay big dividends down the road. As is usually the case, planning and organization can be the crucial factors of a self-study process well done!

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Meeting the Multi-Campus Challenge

Barbara R. Lee
Bill Bates

Facing a self-study and on-site evaluation for North Central Association accreditation is daunting enough. Facing it as a newly merged, six-campus technical college seeking initial accreditation made the prospect foreboding. As we worked our way through the process, however, we not only learned a great deal about ourselves as a college, we validated a concept that had been a driving force in our merging in the first place: we can achieve more together than we could separately. We also discovered firsthand the obvious: working together is more complex than working alone.

Northwest Technical College (NTC) was formed by the 1992 merger of six northern Minnesota technical colleges located from 50 to 150 miles apart. The recency of the merger and the distance between campuses created obvious challenges, and throughout the self-study process, these factors exerted a continuous influence on what we did and how we did it. Thorough planning and careful attention to detail undergirded the process from application through team visit. While these principles helped keep our process focused and "on track," the fact that the college made the requisite commitment of time and money to the process was critical to our success.

In retrospect, the aspects of the process that seemed to be particularly affected by the fact that we had more than one campus include getting college-wide involvement, communicating, writing the report, gathering and organizing the exhibits, and coordinating the team visit. While every college's situation will be unique depending upon its structure, perhaps a review of NTC's experiences may spark some ideas for other multi-campus/multi-site colleges or at least help them anticipate and avoid some of the potential stumbling blocks on the accreditation path.

Getting College-Wide Involvement

The college's NCA steering committee, which we dubbed the Accreditation Committee, included representatives from all campuses. As is true for any college regardless of number of campuses and/or sites, it was critical that our steering committee be composed of members who were respected by their peers, knowledgeable of the college, dedicated to excellence, able to communicate and motivate, and willing to work hard. In addition, as a multi-campus college, we needed to ensure that each campus was well-represented on the committee; consequently, each campus had two members on the committee—one faculty and one administrative—and each college-wide division (custom training services and farm business management) had a member. These Accreditation Committee members did more than just "steer." They became the NCA "standard bearers" on their campuses and provided leadership for this effort. In addition, they formed a solid communications link, ensuring that campuses were kept up-to-date and relaying the input of their campuses back to the committee.

The Accreditation Committee recognized that the self-study process would provide a strong vehicle for the campuses to work together to achieve a common goal, thereby facilitating the process of effectively merging the campuses. Thus *facilitating the merger* became one of the main goals of our self-study, along with our goals of *self-improvement* and *attaining accreditation*. By establishing these clear goals and keeping them continually before us, the campuses pulled together in a mutual effort to prove our adopted motto: *We Are Worthy*.

Since we were all novices at this and since we knew that our structure would make our self-study more complicated than most, we "picked the brains" of other people as we started our planning. To gain the knowledge that we needed, we sought the assistance of someone who had coordinated a successful multi-campus NCA self-study a few years previously; we invited Steve Crow, our NCA staff liaison, to come and visit with us; and we sent several people (including our Self-Study Coordinator, vice coordinator, college president, academic vice president, assessment director, and some of our Accreditation Committee members) to the NCA Annual Meeting in Chicago.

We established a realistic timeline, allowing ourselves two years from the time we submitted our Preliminary Information Forms to the time of our team visit. We knew that involving all campuses would slow down the actual process of the self-study, so we factored that into our timeline. Just getting together to meet is more time consuming than for a one-site college. Had we tried to rush this any faster than we did—amidst all the other work the committees and individuals had to do—the quality of the self-study results would have suffered.

One of the first jobs of the Accreditation Committee was to determine the structure of the self-study. Would we do six individual campus studies and then combine them, or would we do one college-wide self-study from the start? The Committee chose the latter, recognizing that this would intensify the complexities, but also realizing that this would result in a true college self-study. The next problem, then, was designing the process for the self-study. The Accreditation Committee decided to utilize the existing committee structure of the college to integrate the self-study into the normal planning process, rather than form special NCA committees. Because this structure involved campus sub-committees affiliated with related college-wide committees, it created a natural opportunity to involve people at the campus level and at the same time it provided a mechanism to meld the input gathered at the campus level into a college-wide position. Critical to this was the fact that the committees were composed of diverse membership (faculty and staff, male and female, long-time and recent employees) and were established according to function—e.g., curriculum, human resources, facilities and finance, assessment, and so forth. This ensured that the various aspects of the NCA criteria fell under the parameters of one of the college committees. The executive council, composed of college and campus administrators, was also included in the self-study.

An additional reason for utilizing the existing committee structure was that people were already having to attend many committee meetings as we worked on the various structures and processes of our newly merged college. Setting up a parallel structure that required an additional set of meetings would have been counterproductive. By using the existing structure, the self-study could be combined with the committees' other assigned duties and performed in conjunction with regular committee meetings. To elicit the needed introspection required by the self-study, the Accreditation Committee assigned to each committee, including the executive council, a set of questions specifically designed to address aspects of the NCA criteria related to its function. In this way, not only was comprehensive input gathered, but the committees were also able to utilize the criteria to help assess and focus their own efforts.

Communicating

Maintaining communication is always a challenge, but it is especially critical when the participants are as widely dispersed as ours. Not only did we need to communicate among the faculty and staff, but also with the students and the communities in which the campuses are located.

Communicating with the campuses was handled in several ways. We developed and distributed a handbook that outlined our self-study in detail—including goals, process, time line, flowchart, draft table of contents of the report, and committee questions for the self-study. Accreditation Committee members met with the faculty and staff on their campuses several times during the course of the self-study to give information and answer questions. In addition to communicating with individuals and groups on the various campuses via memo (thank goodness for the FAX machine!!), an NCA newsletter was distributed periodically to everyone on all campuses. This newsletter was designed to keep people informed of the progress of the self-study, to keep them apprised of activities related to the self-study, to provide information regarding NCA and its components, and to communicate the particulars of the team visit. To ensure that all communications regarding NCA were attended to, we printed everything that was related to NCA on orchid-colored paper—a gimmick, perhaps, but an effective one.

To facilitate communication between itself and the college committees, the Accreditation Committee assigned one of its own committee members as a liaison to each of the college committees and to the executive council. This liaison's main purpose was to provide a communications link. This included explaining the self-study process, delivering the assigned questions for the self-study, working with the committee chair to ensure the timely completion of the self-study (clarifying questions, communicating expectations, and pushing for completion when necessary), and facilitating the collection of the completed responses. This liaison was more critical for some committees than for others, but at the very least, the liaison formed a concrete connection to the Accreditation Committee.

The Self-Study Coordinator also met with the college's governing board several times during the course of the self-study. The board members received copies of all the NCA newsletters and other pertinent communications, and they were invited to NCA in-service activities held on the campuses. In this way, the board members were kept involved every step of the way—from application to self-study to team visit.

The ultimate means of communicating was the report itself. The final printed report was distributed to all faculty, staff, and administrators. This was the culmination of our efforts and, as such, the Accreditation Committee felt it important that everyone receive his or her own copy. The board members, of course, also received a copy. Because the Self-Study Report is a comprehensive reflection of the college, it is an invaluable resource. The report defines the college—not only for North Central Association, but also for ourselves and for anyone else who wants to learn about the college. This blanket distribution also helped ensure that the report became an integral document in the ongoing operation of the college.

As the date of the visit approached, the Accreditation Committee recognized the need to educate people regarding the NCA team visit, not only because this was a new experience for all of us, but also since our visit would be necessarily quite complex. To help give everyone a better idea of what to expect, the Self-Study Coordinator and vice-coordinator visited each campus for a faculty/staff in-service session that included a discussion of the nature of the team visit and detailed information regarding the schedule of the visit for their own and the other campuses. We also invited people from other accredited technical colleges in the state that had recently hosted a successful team visit to come and tell us about their experiences.

Various methods were used to communicate with students. Campus Accreditation Committee members met with the Student Senate on each campus to answer any questions and to ensure that they were "up to speed" on the self-study and the impending visit. The Senate members met with other students and communicated with them through their own newsletters. Group information sessions were held. In addition, campus NCA task forces used such creative means as posters, table tents, question/answer sessions, and contests to involve and educate students regarding NCA, the self-study, and the visit.

We used a number of ways to communicate with the communities in which the campuses are located. Members of the campus task forces and/or campus administrators appeared on local radio talk shows and met with community groups to tell them about our self-study. Faculty discussed it with advisory committees. We printed an executive summary and this was shared with community leaders and groups and with advisory committees, and news releases were submitted to area newspapers. In these ways, we tried to ensure that everyone knew that "NCA [was] Coming our Way!" (as one of our many posters proclaimed).

Writing the Report

Because of the added difficulties in compiling a report from such diverse input and the added potential for errors and/or inconsistencies, the Accreditation Committee decided that we needed to utilize one report writer—one who was already familiar with the college. Utilizing one writer facilitated writing the report with "one voice." Using a writer who was familiar with the college resulted in that writer being able to pull together the various responses from the college committees and meld them into a cohesive unit. In addition, that writer was able to recognize inconsistencies and find holes in the information and to request additional information where it was lacking. In our case, the most logical person to write the report was the Self-Study Coordinator, who was granted release-time in order to complete this enormous task.

To gather feedback on the self-study report and ensure its accuracy, the initial draft of the report was returned to the committees for review and feedback. This was particularly necessary since the report had to accurately reflect all six campuses. In addition, the initial draft and all subsequent drafts were reviewed by the Accreditation Committee, the college's Executive Committee, and college committee chairs. The drafts were also made available to all interested faculty and staff.

One part of the report that was more complex for us as a multi-campus college was the completion of the Basic Institutional Data (BID) forms. With a multi-campus college, the BIDs must be completed by *each campus*. This is not as easy as it sounds. As we completed our own BIDs we discovered that some "up-front" decision-making was needed in order to ensure consistent data. Because the forms were completed by different people on different campuses, we needed to come to a common interpretation wherever the requested information was somewhat ambiguous and/or the terminology used by North Central wasn't exactly the same as ours. For example, how do we define and calculate which students are "part-time" and which are "full-time"? Since we don't normally refer to our first- and second-year students as "freshmen" and "sophomores," how do we distinguish? In addition, we needed to determine which information was only available at the college level, and which at the campus level. Because we had BIDs for six campuses, we ended up with 128 pages of BIDs!

Gathering and Organizing Exhibits

One of the most cumbersome aspects of the self-study was gathering exhibits for the resource rooms. Besides the normal decisions regarding what to collect, we had to determine which exhibits needed to be gathered for each campus, which for the college, and which for both. Each campus had a resource room that housed both that campus's exhibits and the college exhibits, which were replicated on each campus. One campus was designated as the college resource room. It was at this campus that all team members would ultimately gather after the campus visits so all team members would have access to this college resource room. This resource room had copies of major exhibits from all six campuses—such things as the campus-specific student and faculty handbooks, program fact sheets for all programs in the college, and so forth. At first, we had contemplated replicating all the campus exhibits on each campus. We quickly discarded that notion, however, as we discovered just how much material was gathered for our exhibits. Far too many trees would have had to have been sacrificed for what we ultimately determined was unnecessary duplication.

Another consideration for the resource rooms was how to organize them. Since team members would be visiting more than one campus, we felt it important to have our resource rooms similarly organized so the team members wouldn't have to figure out a new system at each campus. We decided to pull our exhibits together by topic into three-ring binders rather than filing things in file cabinets. To make the material more accessible, we had master lists of the exhibits in the resource rooms. While this procedure worked fairly well, we discovered that it is important to come to agreement on this master list early in the process, and to agree upon on organizational system. We went through several drafts and came up with different versions of the master list as we proceeded through the self-study. This confused the issue and as a result, our exhibits were not as alike as we had hoped they would be.

An important factor in the organizing of the resource rooms was the fact that we appointed a resource person in charge of exhibits at each campus. These six people met several times during the self-study; however, we didn't think about doing this until we were well into the study. If we were to do it again, we would appoint resource people and come up with an agreed upon master list and the organization of the exhibits much earlier in the process. We found ourselves backtracking and redoing more than we would have liked. In the end, however, we were very pleased with the result. Our resource rooms were quite complete and our exhibits were easily accessible, according to feedback we received from the team.

Team Visit

The normal intricacies of a team visit are, of course, magnified by the complexities present when several campuses are involved. As the time of the visit approached, the Accreditation Committee recognized that we needed help. The committee members could not carry out this part of the operation by ourselves. One of the most important and effective creative decisions of the committee was the formation of campus NCA task forces. These task forces were composed of energetic, creative people who "took the ball and ran with it." While the Accreditation Committee was most involved with the self-study process, the campus task forces can take credit for the success of the team visit.

These groups took charge of the campus arrangements for the visit, including coordinating the schedule; arranging for facilities, refreshments, and group sessions; educating community members regarding the impending visit; and preparing the campus for the visit—both physically (in terms of facilities) and mentally (in terms of faculty and staff preparedness). By the time the team visit was nearing, the Accreditation Committee was fairly well worn out—after two+ years of planning and working. The infusion of this new enthusiasm was contagious, and the energy generated by these creative people was infectious.

As might be expected, coordinating the team visit was a particular challenge considering the number of campuses and the number of miles between them. Our college president, Self-Study Coordinator, and team chair had more conversations than is probably usual in planning for the logistics of the visit. It was decided by the team chair that the seven-person team would split up into two-person teams who would each visit two campuses, spending one day on each campus. The most logical combinations of campuses for a team (two campuses per team) were suggested by the Self-Study Coordinator. The team chair accepted those suggestions, then paired the team members and assigned their two campuses. Arrangements for lodging were made by our campus task forces. The chair himself took charge of visiting with college personnel and with our college-based custom services division. The entire team met as a unit the first night and the last night of the visit. They spent the intervening two days visiting campuses.

Logistically, of course, there were many details to take care of. For example, we provided cars for each two-person team and the chair at the beginning of the visit, along with detailed, well-marked maps so the team members could easily get from one campus to the next without difficulty. In addition, since this was northern Minnesota and our visit took place in February, we had to be concerned about weather. We provided the team members with cellular phones so they were never out of touch. This served two purposes: it provided a safety measure when the teams were driving between campuses, and it ensured that the team members could contact the other team members anytime they wanted. We felt that it was important to try to minimize the effects of the team members being physically separated. With the phones always at their disposal, the other team members were never more than a phone call away, even while they were traveling. There were, of course, many other details to arrange; however, we found that all the time spent in anticipating and planning for every aspect of the visit more than paid off, as the visit went more smoothly than we could have hoped. Even the weather cooperated although we can take no credit for that!

While we had been concerned that one day on a campus would not be enough time for a thorough review, we were impressed with the amount of work the team members accomplished in that short time. Of course, the time restrictions meant that it was more critical than ever that we be well organized. The teams had no time to waste waiting for groups to convene or searching for materials. This is where our campus task forces and resource people were critically important. They had everything planned and organized from the minute the team members set foot on the campus until the minute they left. Groups were convened in the appointed rooms, people were available to the team to locate any individuals and/or materials the team requested, refreshments and other arrangements were all taken care of—all courtesy of the task forces.

On the eve of the final day of the team visit, the team members regrouped on one of the campuses to discuss their report, decide on their recommendation for the college, and develop the content of the exit interview. We felt it was important that all campuses be able to participate in the exit interview, not just the campus on which the team was physically located; thus, we arranged for the exit interview to be broadcast over our interactive television system so that people on all campuses could view the interview as it happened. In this way, when the team chair announced that we were being recommended for accreditation, we were all able to share in the elation of the moment.

Conclusion

All in all, while the inherent complexities involved with a multi-campus college make the whole process a bit more challenging, the resulting satisfaction of meeting those challenges effectively and of ending up with a definitive self-study and a team visit that takes place without a "hitch" is likewise increased. Our NCA theme, *We Are Worthy*, was validated, and we all—all six campuses of NTC—could share in the satisfaction of meeting the challenge and ultimately achieving our goal: North Central accreditation.

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Chapter XII

Coordinating Special Types of Evaluations

Getting Started on the Self-Study Process: Institutions Seeking Initial Candidacy

Diane O. Tebbetts

Unaccredited colleges decide to seek accreditation for a wide range of reasons. In the case of Ozarka Technical College, a small rural, comprehensive two-year college, reasons included conversion in 1991 from a postsecondary vocational technical school to a college and legislation stating that this new college would cease to exist in 1997 if it had not achieved accreditation. Although "the Vo Tech" had for some time been accredited by the Commission on Schools, no one there had any experience with the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education and its Preliminary Information Forms, assessment plan requirements, General Institutional Requirements, and Criteria for Accreditation. Needless to say, amidst the excitement of being among the dozen or so schools in Arkansas taking this very big step, apprehensions about the process of gaining that accreditation lurked.

Ozarka's experience, however, has turned out to be a very positive one, leading to a stronger focus on mission, better planning to meet community needs, productive involvement of faculty in college governance, and ongoing assessment of effectiveness in meeting institutional objectives. Ozarka is a better college for having gone through the candidacy program. Obviously, we have found that the greatest rewards have been much more than simply being able to state in our catalog that we are accredited by NCA. The journey has been demanding but very much worth the effort.

Self-study coordinators find themselves responsible for both managing the entire process and making sure everyone involved perceives it as a valuable undertaking. While the job is certainly demanding, it can be accomplished by keeping everyone informed, establishing a clear structure for getting the work done, teaching committees to move beyond description to evaluation, producing a professional quality document, and meeting the evaluation team members' needs while they are on campus.

Keeping Everyone Informed

Who has an interest in your institution's becoming a candidate for accreditation? These are the groups and individuals who should be kept up to date about the self-study process, but the coordinator is not the only person who should be doing the communicating. From the beginning, the campus CEO must be visible and voluble—in attendance at major meetings where the decision to seek accreditation is announced or where progress reports are being shared with faculty, staff, and students, and speaking forcefully of the value of undergoing self-study to achieve accreditation. Campus leaders, members of the Self-Study Steering Committee, trustees, major contributors—all can become effective spokespersons for the importance of what the college has undertaken.

In the beginning, the campus community must be educated about why accreditation is important to the college, what the steps will be, what will be required, and even what some of the terminology means. "Assessment of student learning" may not mean the same thing to everyone who hears it, for instance. Later, as committees progress from collecting information to drawing conclusions, the campus should know what those conclusions are.

Channels of communication can include news releases, memos, e-mail, internal newsletters, alumni bulletins, student newspapers, and the whole range of campus and community meetings, such as staff meetings, standing committee meetings, student government meetings, required convocations, meetings of the board of trustees, and civic club meetings.

Structuring the Process

Who will be involved? What will their responsibilities be? When must various tasks be completed? The coordinator should begin by finding answers for these three questions, knowing that answers will vary widely depending on the nature of particular institutions.

The decision on who will be involved is not the coordinator's alone. The CEO should certainly play a major role and may even wish to select all committee chairs, who will then serve as the Steering Committee. Other senior staff and faculty leaders may also be involved. Committees may be formed by appointing members, asking for volunteers, or some combination of these two. At Ozarka, the president and coordinator selected the Steering Committee, involved those persons in naming the individual working committees, and also encouraged interested persons to volunteer. While employees probably function best as committee chairs, in some cases a community leader or trustee may prove to be a good choice. Certainly, students, trustees, and interested citizens should serve as members of at least some, if not all, of the committees.

The first thing each committee will want to know, naturally, is what its responsibilities are. The coordinator should have a written job description for each committee, including questions to be answered, information to be located, sources to be checked, and reports to be completed. The *Handbook of Accreditation* is essential in developing helpful job descriptions, and coordinators may also find the annual *Collection of Papers on Self-Study and Institutional Improvement* useful as well. Ideally, each committee's report could become a chapter of the self-study, but in reality, an editor will doubtless have to rework the materials submitted into a seamless whole. The coordinator and editor (who may or may not be the same person) will have to decide on the most effective format for reports so that information can be easily incorporated into the larger document.

Committees will also need deadlines, so the coordinator must develop a feasible timeline for the entire process. The best place to begin is at the end: when does the college want the team of NCA Consultant-Evaluators to visit? Working backward, the coordinator should set dates for submitting interim committee reports and final reports, making requests for additional data, editing and formatting the text, completing the Basic Institutional Data forms, printing and binding the self-study document, and getting it in the mail a month in advance of the visit. For small colleges, six months is a bare minimum to get everything done, assuming full-time commitment of the coordinator. A year or even eighteen months is better. Larger institutions may require two full years. Institutions should resort to a shortened timeline only for compelling reasons because the stress inevitably associated with the accreditation process will be compounded, perhaps to a counterproductive level. Everyone involved must keep in mind that self-study is a valuable way to strengthen the college and thus deserves time for thorough research and thoughtful, unhurried consideration.

Moving from Description to Evaluation

The self-study must be more than a snapshot of the current state of the college: it must also convince the evaluation team that the college has the fiscal, physical, and human resources to achieve accreditation and to sustain itself into the future. While teams expect that institutions entering candidacy do not meet all five Criteria for Accreditation, they must be convinced that the college understands its strengths and weaknesses, as well as the opportunities and threats presented by its environment. Assessment plans and formal institutional planning processes may be in their infancy, but at a minimum the self-study must take an evaluative stance.

For instance, rather than simply providing a table of such faculty data as educational level, years of employment, gender, and age, the committee accumulating this information must step back and ask what it all means. Are issues of diversity being addressed? Are significant numbers approaching retirement? Do particular departments experience a high rate of turnover? Why is the situation like it is? Does something need to be done about it? What new costs might be involved? Where could the money come from? When could changes realistically be implemented? The Steering Committee must then examine the committees' perceptions and recommendations and decide, given the overall situation at the college, which are significant enough to go into the self-study document.

Producing the Document

The team forms its first impression of the college from the self-study and other documents submitted before the visit. The self-study also becomes a valuable reference for new and continuing employees' internal use. For both reasons, the document should exhibit high quality, especially in its contents but also in its appearance.

The quality of the contents is, of course, of paramount importance, and the campus experts should be involved—that is, the English faculty, who should at the very least be asked to proofread the final draft. The editor certainly may come from another discipline but must have excellent writing skills, an understanding of how to organize and structure written communications, and facility in producing a well-supported, grammatically correct, and stylistically effective persuasive essay.

Also important is the way the document looks. Here, art or business faculty and the public relations staff may have valuable expertise. Most colleges can produce attractive text, graphs, and charts using one of the proliferating word processing or desktop publishing programs and a laser printer. Some can even print attractive covers. At Ozarka, the business information technology faculty worked with the coordinator to design camera-ready copy for cover, chapter dividers, and text, which were then sent out for commercial printing. College staff assembled and bound the volumes.

Meeting the Team's Information Needs

When the self-study is over, it still isn't over because all the information the team will want to see cannot, and should not, be packaged between two covers. It is preferable to provide a thorough but concise self-study document of less than 200 pages, including appendices and Basic Institutional Data forms. Important information not contained in the materials mailed to the team should be gathered and organized in the Resource Room.

One way to organize materials is by the five Criteria for Accreditation. It is also helpful to have supporting materials for the General Institutional Requirements assembled all together in labeled folders so that team members do not have to spend time searching through voluminous committee minutes, policy manuals, student records, audits, and all the other stacks of paper it seemed important to include in the Resource Room. However the materials are organized, they should be clearly labeled, with a one- or two-page index furnished to each team member.

At Ozarka, individual file folders went into labeled hanging files that were arranged in inexpensive plastic file boxes on a long counter top, each box labeled to correspond to a major heading in the index. Binders containing minutes or policies and procedures were also labeled on the spine and placed appropriately between the file boxes. Many colleges use file cabinets to hold all the materials.

Conclusion

Gaining accreditation is truly the proverbial "journey of a thousand miles." That first step, beginning the self-study for initial candidacy, seems a great distance from the final goal. By keeping people informed, structuring the process carefully, evaluating thoughtfully, and planning for change—and providing the team with all the information it needs—colleges will make progress on the journey.

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Using the New Criteria to Build Toward a Successful Team Visit

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Jim Hall

Introduction

A new institution of higher education—whether "new" means absolutely new or newly focused—is a fast-lane enterprise. Change is the byword, change resulting from new programs, new faculty, new staff, new emphases, new facilities. The positives of "new" are many and desirable—excitement, energy, challenge, creativity, optimism, faculty and staff mutually engaged in shaping possibilities…But the negatives of "new" can exist as well—raw, changeable, untested, tiring.

A new institution will reach a point when the negatives threaten to overwhelm the positives, the point of potential burnout. At this point an institution will need to pause in its history to locate its defining voice, to drop anchor and stabilize, to assess its journey so far before relaunching into its future. It is at this point that an institutional self-study is imperative, and one anchored in an objective, external definition of "effective institution." This canonical definition, such as that provided by North Central's 24 General Institutional Requirements (GIRs) and five Criteria for Accreditation, allows an institution to determine how it is progressing according to standards established by professionals.

NorthWest Arkansas Community College (NWACC) realized that it was nearing this crossroads in May of 1993. Since 1990 it had existed as an independent and comprehensive community college (between 1974 and 1990 it had been a branch campus of another institution), had grown from 1,200 to 2,000 students, and had two site visits (1991 and 1993) as a candidate institution for North Central accreditation. Even though a two million dollar increase in state funding was in 1993 still only a hope and a 90,000 square foot central facility little more than a blueprint, a College committee decided it was time to move from building toward an accreditable institution to declaring itself arrived and accreditable. Various factors played into this decision, not the least of which were desires for greater stability and effectiveness. To NWACC Steering Committee members making this decision, there had been a perceptible change in the rhythm of the institution- from start-up frenzy to more staid reflection. This, too, became a signal for the institution to shift its focus during the next two years from candidacy to accreditation.

One thing important to underscore is that the changing rhythm of the institution preceded any decision to seek accreditation. The committee wisely realized that North Central's granting of accreditation to an institution is analogous to awarding a blue ribbon in recognition of excellence in some regard. Accreditation is not the most important end goal; an improved learning environment is. Although the two processes overlap, the life of an institution must take precedence over an accreditation self-study. A college can manage this balance profitably by using established accreditation guidelines as a blueprint for assessment and improvement of institutional life.

The decision at NWACC to seek accreditation came, too, at a time when NCA guidelines were fluid. After causing initial worry because they were not complete and were offered to institutions in draft form, the revised North Central Criteria for Accreditation proved a boon to NWACC's crossroads assessment. They were helpful both philosophically and practically. The revised wording of the criteria and the accompanying explanations underscored for the self-study coordinators that a particular philosophy of what higher education is must be embraced by NWACC before accreditation could be granted: higher (not merely postsecondary) learning (not simply teaching) must form the heart of the institution, be offered ethically, and be demonstrable through patterns of evidence not just for the present but for the future as well. With its emphasis on thinking and research skills, on interdisciplinary study, on innovative classroom methodology, on enabling students to develop, NWACC appeared at the outset to embrace the spirit of the standards.

Evidence to prove that NWACC met this definition was ample in some areas, skimpy in others, and altogether scattered. To date, NWACC still does not have the wherewithal to hire an institutional research director to centralize these data. This is where the new criteria provided practical aid and helped keep a two-year assessment focused.

☐ **The institution has a clear and publicly stated purpose consistent with its mission...**

Except for the basal GIRs, no criterion is more fundamental to an institution than North Central's Criterion One. And for an institution at a crossroads, no assessment is more important than to determine the viability of its mission statement. For these reasons, in a series of institution-wide, grass-roots meetings, NWACC chose to use its mission statement as a major organizing principle for its self-study (see accompanying mission statement). The statement was dissected into ten different goals and objectives. Each goal and objective formed the basis for a committee (see chart).

The ten study committees evaluated each goal and objective of the College mission statement on the following basis:

- — How human, financial, and physical resources have been organized to accomplish the purpose/objective listed in the mission statement (Criterion Two);
- — How multiple patterns of evidence show that this purpose/objective is being accomplished (Criterion Three); and
- — How this purpose/objective is being accomplished with integrity (Criterion Five).

This approach had an additional bonus for a college that had already gone through two self-studies in three years: it was different and thus sidestepped a potential "hohum," or formulaic attitude. The previous two self-studies had been organized by a combination of College departments and North Central candidacy criteria. Organizing by institutional objectives provided new insight and interest at a crucial time as well as being more germane to the institution at the crossroads.

☐ **The institution is accomplishing the purpose of its mission...**

As indicated above, this criterion was applied ten times in the course of the self-study, an emphasis befitting its centrality in leading an institution to excellence. Its importance was also underscored by the time and care taken to prove the repeated assertions—the "multiple patterns of evidence"—that NWACC was meeting its stated goals. The study committees spent more time on determining, gathering, evaluating, and arranging these patterns than on any other activity. That which could not fit into the self-study document per se were arranged into files of supporting documentation and located in a resource room for evaluation team members to use at their discretion.

An entire and separate document was also produced to augment this recurring theme of the self-study—Assessing Student Academic Achievement. Whereas the study committees were mixtures of faculty, staff, administration, students, and community members, the committee that produced the learning assessment document was entirely a faculty entity. Assessment is, in our opinion, a faculty privilege and responsibility. This group purposefully worked independently from the other study committees in determining the instruction-caused changes that students undergo while enrolled at NWACC and how these changes are both currently measured and should be measured in the future (see chart). The resulting information both formed a separate document— part of volume two of the self-study—and fed into the appropriate spots in the institutional assessment.

NWACC Mission Statement

The Mission of Northwest Arkansas Community College is to meet the educational and occupational training needs of the citizens of the community college district, which is its primary service area, as well as Benton County and selective adjacent areas of northwest Arkansas. Central to this mission will be a responsiveness to local needs that are not met by any other educational entity.

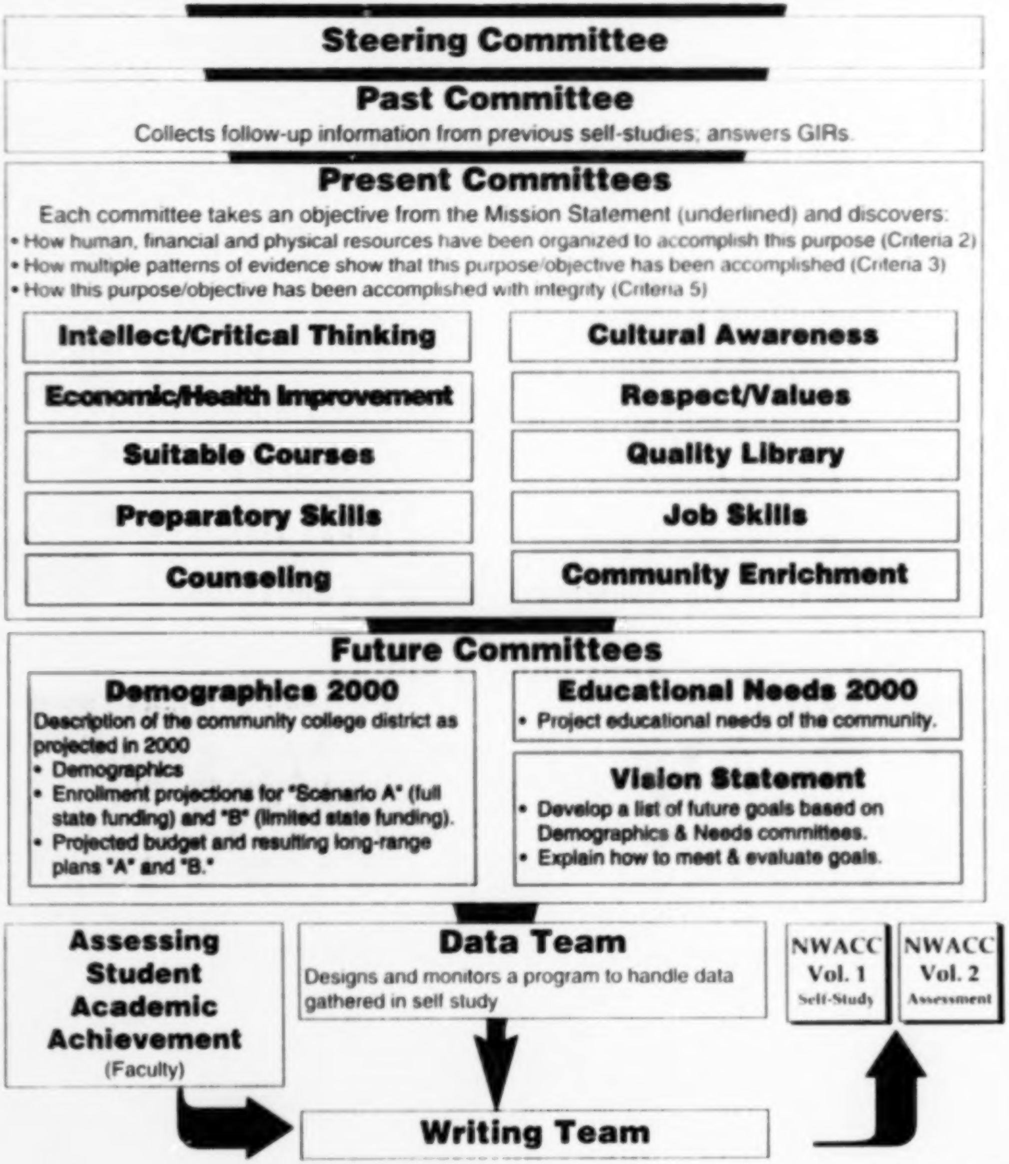
NWACC maintains an open-door admission policy. The intention of this is to enhance student's growth in such areas as intellect, cultural awareness, critical thinking, economic improvement, health, self-respect, consideration of others, and formation of further development of a value system.

NWACC exists to provide the most cost efficient way to further a student's education by using available municipal, public and private facilities whenever practical and economical, and to provide financial assistance to students as monies become available to allow access to all eligible/educationally qualified students who can benefit from programs offered by the college.

Objectives:

1. To offer courses leading to Associate degrees suited for transfer to senior colleges and universities at the upper-division level.
2. To maintain a quality library.
3. To offer courses leading to Associate degrees and certificates in technical and vocational program areas.
4. To provide preparatory skill development in mathematics, reading and English for youth and adults whose previous educational achievements may have been insufficient to allow them to reach their personal or occupational goals, or succeed in college-level courses.
5. To establish a cooperative effort with business and industry and local Chambers of Commerce to provide job entry-level skills, retraining or upgrading.
6. To provide student services including, but not limited to, counseling and guidance, career exploration assistance, and financial aid.
7. Quality of life enrichment courses will be provided in cooperation with the local programs, RENEW and BEEP.

NWACC SELF-STUDY OVERVIEW



Steering Committee

Past Committee

Collects follow-up information from previous self-studies; answers GIRs.

Present Committees

Each committee takes an objective from the Mission Statement (underlined) and discovers:

- How human, financial and physical resources have been organized to accomplish this purpose (Criteria 2)
- How multiple patterns of evidence show that this purpose/objective has been accomplished (Criteria 3)
- How this purpose/objective has been accomplished with integrity (Criteria 5)

Intellect/Critical Thinking

Cultural Awareness

Economic/Health Improvement

Respect/Values

Suitable Courses

Quality Library

Preparatory Skills

Job Skills

Counseling

Community Enrichment

Future Committees

Demographics 2000

Description of the community college district as projected in 2000

- Demographics
- Enrollment projections for "Scenario A" (full state funding) and "B" (limited state funding).
- Projected budget and resulting long-range plans "A" and "B."

Educational Needs 2000

- Project educational needs of the community.

Vision Statement

- Develop a list of future goals based on Demographics & Needs committees.
- Explain how to meet & evaluate goals.

Assessing Student Academic Achievement
(Faculty)

Data Team

Designs and monitors a program to handle data gathered in self study

Writing Team

NWACC Vol. 1 Self-Study

NWACC Vol. 2 Assessment

☐ **The institution can continue to accomplish...**

Institutions at crossroads find themselves in the process of repositioning themselves from having one foot in the past and one in the present to having one foot in the present and one in the future. (This repositioning is another excellent way that a candidate institution can realize that it is ready to be accredited.) In determining the degree to which NWACC would be able to meet North Central Criterion Four, the Self-Study Coordinators appointed three "future" committees (see chart).

One committee gathered community demographics for the year 2000, and made enrollment projections based on those data and available projected revenue scenarios. One committee projected resulting institutional needs. And one committee wrote a correlating revised mission—or vision statement. This material ultimately provided one of the most continuously valuable parts of the self-study—the long-range planning segment of 32 objectives with accompanying game plans to take NWACC from August 2, 1995 (its official accreditation date) into the next century by way of the next official reaccreditation study and visit.

Practical Advice

Like a self-study, accreditation is a process not an event. It is also part of a much longer, fluid history of an institution, which is itself a process and not a single event. What is challenging to a Self-Study Coordinator is to accept as normal and positive that while the "official" preaccreditation self-study is underway, the reality that the document is supposed to represent will be changing with new classes, new students, new faculty and staff. Simply put, the accreditation process is never complete because it is a cyclical process of perpetual self-renewal. For those of us who prefer closure, this is a tough reality.

To help ease anxiety that this Protean quality can cause, the "practical advice" session that complements this paper will help participants determine how the new North Central criteria can provide them with concrete "handles" for their own preaccreditation self-studies, handles that fit the changing realities of their own institutions.

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From Candidacy to Accreditation: The Self-Study Process as the Impetus for Institutional Growth

June Prince

Why did a two-year technical college (especially a former vocational-technical school which some at the outset gave little chance of achieving candidacy status) make the decision to seek initial accreditation only two years after receiving candidacy status? What did the college do to become a legitimate institution of higher education, one worthy of accreditation? How did it accomplish this after postponing its initial candidacy visit because it felt further self-analysis was necessary? This presentation will focus on the answers to these questions.

Background Information

Ouachita Technical College (OTC) is a public, community-based, two-year technical college authorized to grant associate degrees and technical certificates representing both transfer and occupational/technical programs. First established in 1972 as a state vocational-technical school, the institution was one of ten legislated to become technical colleges. In July 1991, transfer from the State Board of Vocational Education to the State Board of Higher Education occurred. Continued affiliation with higher education was contingent upon achieving NCA accreditation.

OTC began the process of seeking initial candidacy during the summer of 1992, planning for an April 1993 team visit. However, as the self-study process evolved, the Steering Committee determined that further self-analysis was needed and the visit was postponed until September 1993. In February 1994, the Commission granted initial candidacy. Prior to the College's 1995 initial accreditation visit, OTC submitted a *Request for Institutional Change* asking for the addition of an Associate of Arts program to its NCA-approved curricula. Upon recommendation of a focused evaluation team, the Commission approved the *Request* in August 1994. In September 1995 the College experienced a successful initial accreditation visit.

The decision to seek accreditation in 1995 was made after careful examination of the college's progress since its initial candidacy evaluation. Enrollment had increased 156 percent; six associate of applied science, an associate of arts, and two technical certificate programs had been added; planning and assessment cycles had been implemented; alternate funding sources had been secured; the recommendations of the candidacy consultant-evaluators had been addressed. The College felt it fulfilled the Criteria and that it was ready to seek accreditation.

Success Factors

Although not exhaustive, the following delineates factors that had a significant impact on the success of Ouachita Technical College's initial accreditation attempt:

- The College remained mindful that "institutional effectiveness" was contingent upon accomplishment of appropriate mission and purposes All activities must emanate from the mission and its requirements.

- The GIRs and the Criteria served as the framework for an intensive, **honest** self-examination. Furthermore, they provided a delineation of the concepts, philosophy, and characteristics common to the higher education community. The accreditation process served as a basis for institutional development.
- A strong commitment to the success of the College by the Board of Trustees, administration, faculty, staff, and students, as well as the support of the community allowed for rapid institutional improvements and growth.
- An experienced president was employed who provided appropriate leadership for a developing institution of higher education.
- Employees were not afraid to challenge the status quo and were willing to go "above and beyond" in order to effect institutional improvements.
- Extensive curricula reform and program development were accomplished through the efforts of the faculty.
- Valuable advice, assistance, and guidance were provided by NCA, the Arkansas State Department of Education, peer institutions, and various consultants.
- The self-study process utilized extensive involvement of the *total* college community. Virtually every full-time employee served on subcommittees for both the candidacy and initial accreditation self-studies. This fostered a campus climate conducive to the hard work and flexibility needed to position OTC as an institution worthy of accreditation. (Although we are a small institution and needed everyone's participation, larger institutions would be wise to involve representatives of all constituencies and to keep everyone informed.)
- Members of the Steering Committee were campus leaders representing a cross-section of the college community. As subcommittee chairpersons, their efforts in the process of self-evaluation and in the preparation of committee reports (from which the Self-Study Report was developed) were vital.
- A Self-Study Plan was disseminated that not only carefully outlined the organization and time line for the self-study process but articulated each committee's area of responsibility.
- The Self-Study Report was evaluative rather than descriptive, succinctly summarizing the information necessary for the evaluation visit, and documenting institutional effectiveness. Supporting evidence was readily available in the Resource Room during each visit.

Conclusion

The candidacy period was important in the College's quest for accreditation. It was the impetus in the College's transition to a genuine institution of higher education. It also made the accreditation self-study less ominous and allowed for its "fine-tuning." (In other words, we learned from our mistakes!)

The initial accreditation visit was a gratifying experience. Although the college community felt OTC met the Criteria, a collective sigh of relief could be heard when the team announced its recommendation of initial accreditation for the maximum five-year period.

In addition to the obvious value derived, the accreditation process was significant in this institution's development and growth. Viewing it as a catalyst for increasing institutional effectiveness, rather than as an attempt to please the Commission, produced worthwhile results.

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The Mandated Focused Visit: A Catalyst for Positive Change at Mid-Plains Community College Area

Ford M. Craig
G.G. Fitch

The Institution and Its Accreditation History

Mid–Plains Community College Area (MPCCA) serves eighteen counties that cover 20,500 square miles of west central and southwest Nebraska and is one of six Nebraska community college areas/districts. Farming, ranching, and cattle production are major economic activities in the region. Union Pacific and Burlington Railroads also contribute significantly to the district's economy.

MPCCA is a comprehensive community college district (about 1700 FTE students) comprised of McCook Community College (MCC) and Mid–Plains Community College (MPCC) with its two campus locations – in North Platte Nebraska. McCook Community College (primarily academic transfer) is located in McCook, Nebraska, is Nebraska's oldest community college (1926), and was first granted NCA accreditation in 1980. MPCC is a composite institution established in 1974 but derived from what was originally North Platte Junior College (1965) and Nebraska Area Vocational-Technical College (1967); MPCC, with its two campus locations—McDonald–Belton (academic transfer) and Voc– Tech—was granted NCA accreditation in 1981. An Area–wide self–study for accreditation was conducted during the 1984–85 school year, and MPCCA was granted Area–wide NCA accreditation by Commission action in June 1986.

Factors that Contributed to a Focused Visit

There were generally two long–term problems that appeared in the 1980 and 1981 individual self–studies and then surfaced again in the 1984–85 Area–wide accreditation cycle:

- lack of comprehensive, Area–wide, strategic planning and budgeting, (including mission statement review); and
- deficiencies in evaluation and development practices as they related to full time MPCCA employees in general and faculty in particular.

By October 1991 evaluation, only minimal progress had been made to alleviate these long-standing concerns, and the evaluation team further identified three more current problems:

- an Associate of General Studies degree that did not contain any general general studies, core–class requirements;
- a community college Area in which the two colleges (three campuses) continued to function as independent institutions, resulting in duplication of some administrative functions;
- an assessment plan (student academic achievement) that had not been fully developed and then formally adopted by the MPCCA Board of Governors.

Consequently, the 1991 NCA evaluation team recommended MPCCA be granted continued accreditation with the next comprehensive evaluation in seven years and a focused visit to be conducted during 1994–95 on the five aforementioned concerns.

Actions Taken to Address Focused Concerns – 1991 through Mid–1994

The process of addressing the identified concerns began under one chancellor was completed under another. This section of the paper highlights actions initiated and/or projected by the first, and the next section details measures taken and/or facilitated by the second.

Shortly after the evaluation team members completed their visit in October of 1991, appropriate councils at McCook Community College voted to remove the Associate of General Studies degree from their publications. This action was officially conveyed to NCA by a letter from the Chancellor. Having accomplished this first corrective action, the MPCCA Chancellor prompted the creation of and then guided and/or monitored several groups whose efforts and products were directly related to addressing additional identified concerns:

- In April of 1992, a "Task Force on Assessment" was created to develop fully an Area–wide plan to assess and document student academic achievement. (Assessment Concern)
- After MPCCA Governing Board approval, a consultant was hired and a comprehensive, Area–wide, strategic planning process was initiated and continued until June of 1993. (It should be noted that a rudimentary format was produced, but a final, completed plan was never finished.) (Planning Concern)
- During the spring and summer of 1993, a Mission Statement Review Group was established and performed a systematic and thorough review of the MPCCA mission statement. (Mission Review and Planning Concern)
- In October of 1993, the MPCCA Chancellor formally established a "Focused Group Task Force" to oversee institutional preparations for the visit and to guide, review, and adjust the final necessary report. (Area Cohesiveness/Administrative Duplication Concern)
- In June of 1994, the Chancellor established a Human Resource Development Committee to organize the HRD function at MPCCA. (Staff Evaluation and Development Concern)

By July of 1994, much of the new found energy and direction had been lost upon the retirement of the Chancellor. Yet, the initial assignment of the committees, staffing, and support of the Office of Institutional Research had accomplished one thing: a catalyst for change.

Actions Taken to Address Focused Concerns–From September 1994 to Present

On September 1, 1994, a new Chancellor took office charged with the responsibility to complete preparations for the NCA focused visit seven months away. The charge by the Board of governors began a series of fourteen to sixteen hour days for several months for the Chancellor and a number of the staff.

Although a critical time to begin serving at the pleasure of the Board, it proved valuable period because of the wealth of information gathered in preparation for the focused visit and the genuine concern displayed by the staff of the college in passing the focused visit.

The accumulated data formed a basis by which the Chancellor initiated a legal specific compliance audit to examine policies, procedures, handbooks, and general operation. From that process, the Board of Governors authorized funding for a private, external review and in–control audit. All of the materials thus generated provided additional support and information for the NCA focused visit.

Additionally, the combined information reaffirmed MPCCA strengths while at the same time provided a close inspection of system weaknesses. Directly related to NCA concerns and our findings, the Area developed a new budget process, withdrew a staff–employee handbook, re–examined policies (which is ongoing), produced a vehicle by which strategic planning is occurring, and made significant adjustments in the three campus/central office organizational patterns. Simply, the direction provided by NCA and the preparations required for the focused visit have allowed MPCCA to "Right Size" and adjust to and for the future.

The MPCCA focused visit efforts required faculty/staff in–service, the distribution and approval of a much needed MPCCA Assessment Plan, the formation of a strategic planning (and the self–study for 1998–99) committee, a complete position audit for more than 100 employees, and the establishment of a Human Resource Office.

In every case, the material whether in draft or finished product was available for the focused visit team. The staff knew that we had addressed the issues of the past, created a solid foundation for the present, and now stood ready to project MPCCA's future...prepared.

The Visit and the Snow Storm

Methodical preparation by the Focused Visit Task Force (including clear and regular communication to all related audiences prior to the April 1995 evaluation) paid dividends when a late winter ice storm and blizzard ushered the NCA consultant-evaluators into MPCCA. As such, the blizzard added a bit of drama to the visit – but little more. MPCCA board members, faculty, classified staff, and administrators worked hard to facilitate the focused visit process in spite of the inclement weather. Key preparations and arrangements in the last several months leading up to the evaluation included:

- conducting a fall in–service—for most MPCCA employees—devoted to the concerns and actions taken to address them;
- preparing, editing, compiling, and mailing the final report documents as directed;
- establishing an organized resource room that contained supporting documentation;
- coordinating local arrangements for the consultant–evaluators;
- keeping the MPCCA Focused Visit Task Force apprised of all details related to the visit; and
- scheduling the date, time, and location of the first meeting between the Chancellor, the two Team Members, and the Focused Visit Coordinator.

These preparatory steps, supportive MPCCA board members and employees, two very flexible consultant–evaluators, and several four–wheel drive vehicles made the visit possible and productive—if not exactly business as usual. At the close of their stay, the evaluators concluded that most of the major concerns had been or were being dealt with in a satisfactory manner; however, (1) the stalled– out strategic planning process needed to be reactivated and completed prior to the next comprehensive visit, and (2) a tighter system of internal financial controls needed to be instituted.

MPCCA Since the Visit: Foundations for the Comprehensive Visit 1998-99

After the focused visit, everyone who helped prepare for the event took a few weeks to rest and to think about the next NCA evaluation—the comprehensive evaluation scheduled for 1998–99. Since the April 1995 focused visit, a number of steps/actions have been taken to strengthen MPCCA—for its own good—and to better position it for the 1998-99 comprehensive.

First, an Area Right Sizing Plan (reallocation of human resources, funds) has been created, and parts of it have been implemented. For example, (1) the Dean of Student's position at the Voc–Tech Campus has not been filled; (2) the President's post at McDonald–Belton Campus has not been filled; (3) it is projected that the position of Chancellor will be eliminated; (4) a new position, Dean of Administrative Services, has been created with the individual being responsible for accounts, physical plant, and human resources—some of which were formerly maintained primarily at the campus level; (5) several other administrative and classified staff positions (e.g., office managers) are to be reduced and/or eliminated; and (6) the concept of site–based management is being implemented.

Business and financial procedures have also been improved. Part of this is in response to an ongoing criminal investigation (a theft was identified during the in–control compliance audit) and part in response to the findings of the focused visit. To this end, (1) an in–control audit–Phase II–is being continued, and (2) a Management Information System is being developed.

Directly related to NCA, an Area NCA Steering Committee has begun the initial preparations of a plan to conduct the 1998–99 comprehensive visit. Committee members will be guiding a two-fold process: (1) self-study, and (2) strategic planning. As a part of this committee's efforts a review of the MPCCA Mission Statement is currently in progress.

Beyond these, other activities and changes completed, in progress, or planned include the following:

- reviewing the role of the central office building to place central services on campus, (in progress)
- publication of the first ever combined college catalog and class schedules, (completed)
- making a possible name change for MPCC (planned), and
- participating in a state–wide transfer agreement.

Conclusion

The North Central Association in its relationship with MPCCA has provided and continues to provide a stimulus for positive institutional change. The focused visit of April 1995 caused MPCCA to respond earnestly to the 1986 and 1991 comprehensive evaluation findings. The *process* of responding was (and continues to be) as important as some of the results. This was and is so because, for MPCCA, the *process* signalled a new and much wider awareness that all was *not well*, major changes needed to be made, and the clock was ticking.

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A Collection of Papers on Self-Study and Institutional Improvement

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